



## Digital Philanthropy and Its Role in Building Social Solidarity in Indonesia: A Qualitative Study of Community-Based Social Action

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**Abstract:** This study examines the role of digital philanthropy in fostering social solidarity in Indonesia through community-based social actions. The rapid growth of digital philanthropic practices in the post-pandemic era, mediated by social media and online platforms, has transformed collective humanitarian engagement. This study aims to explore how digital philanthropy contributes to the formation of social solidarity and social cohesion. A qualitative approach using a case study method was employed. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with fifteen community-based philanthropic actors, participant observation, and social media document analysis. Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's interactive model, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that digital philanthropy strengthens social solidarity through digital empathy, trust-building, and collective participation. Social media functions as an inclusive interactive space that expands cross-group solidarity networks. However, challenges such as digital inequality and algorithmic bias remain significant. This study concludes that digital philanthropy holds strategic potential to enhance social solidarity when supported by inclusive and sustainable governance frameworks.

**Keywords:** Civil society; Digital Philanthropy; Qualitative Study; Social Action; Social Solidarity

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Digital philanthropy is a rapidly growing social phenomenon with the increasing penetration of information and communication technology into global society and in Indonesia (Castells, 2022). Digital transformation has changed the way individuals and groups participate in social and humanitarian activities. Donation practices are no longer limited to face-to-face interactions but are instead mediated by online platforms and social media. This change broadens public access to solidarity-based social action. In Indonesia, digital philanthropy experienced significant acceleration during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The crisis has spurred the emergence of various digital community-based humanitarian initiatives. Social media plays a crucial role in spreading narratives of empathy and social concern. Personal and emotional digital narratives have been shown to increase public participation (Kim & Kim, 2024). However, the growth of digital philanthropy also raises new issues. The solidarity formed is often temporary. Therefore, this phenomenon requires critical examination.

Numerous international studies confirm that digital media facilitates collective action through connective action mechanisms that are independent of formal organizational structures (Bennett & Segerberg, 2021). Individuals are connected through shared concerns about specific

social issues. In the Southeast Asian context, digital philanthropy has been shown to strengthen civic participation and social solidarity across groups (David & Alampay, 2020). In Indonesia, various donation platforms and digital communities have become dynamic spaces for social collaboration. National studies show that digital transparency increases public trust in philanthropic institutions (Sutopo & Meiji, 2022). This trust serves as crucial social capital for the sustainability of social action. However, most research still emphasizes the technical aspects and effectiveness of fundraising. The relational dimension and social solidarity have not been studied in depth. Yet, social solidarity is a key element in the sustainability of humanitarian movements. Therefore, this research has strong academic relevance.

This research starts from the assumption that digital philanthropy is not simply a fundraising practice, but rather a social phenomenon that shapes new relationships and meanings of solidarity (Castells, 2022). Solidarity in the digital space is fluid and adaptable to social dynamics. However, the literature also warns of the risk of commodifying solidarity in the digital ecosystem (Eikenberry & Turcotte, 2021). Humanitarian narratives have the potential to be reduced to mere viral content. This situation can weaken the meaning of long-term solidarity. Therefore, it is crucial to understand how social solidarity is truly formed through digital philanthropy. The community context is a crucial factor in maintaining the meaning and sustainability of solidarity. Community provides social closeness and moral legitimacy. This research focuses on community-based digital philanthropy. This approach distinguishes this research from previous studies. Thus, it offers a new perspective in the study of digital philanthropy.

Based on this background, this study aims to uncover the role of digital philanthropy in building community-based social solidarity in post-pandemic Indonesia. The research questions focus on how digital philanthropy practices are carried out by communities and how social solidarity is formed through these practices. This study also analyzes factors such as trust, motivation, and social cohesion in digital philanthropy (Saxton & Wang, 2022). The theoretical contribution of this research lies in enriching the study of social solidarity in the context of a digital society. Practically, this research provides recommendations for digital philanthropy managers and policymakers. The research findings are expected to strengthen the governance of digital philanthropy in Indonesia. Furthermore, this research is relevant to sociology, communication, and social development studies. Thus, this research contributes across disciplines. The focus on the Indonesian context provides strong empirical value. This article is structured systematically to answer the research objectives.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed a qualitative approach with a case study method. A qualitative approach is widely used to explore social meanings, lived experiences, and contextual dynamics within communities (Creswell & Poth, 2022). This approach was chosen to deeply understand the dynamics of community-based digital philanthropy, where social interaction and meaning construction play an important role (Merriam & Tisdell, 2021). Case studies allow for a holistic exploration of the social context and provide rich, detailed insights into real-life phenomena (Yin, 2024).

The research focused on digital philanthropy communities in Indonesia, as digital platforms have increasingly transformed collective giving behaviors and community participation (Saxton & Wang, 2020). A qualitative approach is relevant for exploring social meanings and experiences because it emphasizes interpretation rather than measurement (Tracy, 2020). Data were collected from multiple sources to capture diverse perspectives and strengthen contextual understanding (Stake, 2021).

This method enabled data triangulation, which is considered essential in qualitative inquiry to improve credibility and trustworthiness (Nowell et al., 2021). The validity of the research was strengthened through this process, ensuring that findings were grounded in consistent evidence. This approach aligns with the research objectives, which emphasize understanding rather than prediction. The research did not aim for statistical generalizations but rather analytical depth, as commonly highlighted in qualitative case study research (Yin, 2024). The primary focus was on in-depth understanding. Therefore, this method was deemed appropriate.

Informants were selected purposively. Informants consisted of philanthropic community managers, volunteers, and active donors. A total of fifteen informants were recruited. The selection criteria were based on active involvement in digital philanthropy. A snowball technique was used to expand the informant network. This approach allowed access to key actors. Informants had diverse backgrounds. This diversity enriched the research data. In-depth interviews were conducted, each lasting 60–90 minutes. Data were recorded and transcribed. This process ensured data accuracy.

In addition to interviews, this study utilized participant observation. The researcher engaged with digital community activities. Observations were conducted on social media platforms and online activities. This technique allows for understanding the context of social interactions. Observational data complemented interview data. Additionally, document analysis was conducted on social media content. Documents included posts, donation reports,

and campaign narratives. Document data provided additional perspectives. Triangulation was performed between data sources. This process increased the validity of the findings. A multi-method approach strengthened the analysis. This method aligns with qualitative research standards, thus maintaining data quality.

Data analysis was conducted using the Miles and Huberman interactive model. The first stage was data reduction. Data were selected and coded based on themes. The second stage was data presentation. Data were organized into matrices and narratives. The third stage was drawing conclusions. The analysis process was iterative. Researchers continuously reflected on the data. Validation was carried out through member checking. Informants were given the opportunity to verify the findings. This process enhanced the credibility of the research. The analysis was conducted systematically. This approach is commonly used in qualitative research. This model was relevant to the research objectives. Therefore, data analysis was conducted consistently.

Ethical aspects of the research were taken seriously. Informants were given an explanation of the research objectives. Consent to participate was obtained consciously. Informants' identities were kept confidential. The data is used solely for academic purposes. This research adheres to ethical principles of social research. There is no coercion in participation. Informants can withdraw at any time. The research process is conducted transparently. Research ethics are a crucial foundation. This maintains the integrity of the research. Therefore, this research meets ethical standards. The limitations of the research are openly acknowledged.

### **3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The research findings show that community-based digital philanthropy has grown rapidly post-pandemic. Informants stated that the social crisis has driven digital solidarity. Social media has become a primary means of mobilizing aid. Digital campaigns enable rapid responses to needs. Community participation has increased significantly. Solidarity is formed through empathetic narratives. This practice reflects the logic of connective action (Bennett & Segerberg, 2021). Donors engage without formal membership. Involvement is voluntary and flexible. Digital media expands the reach of social action. Cross-regional solidarity becomes possible. These findings demonstrate a transformation in solidarity patterns.

Trust emerged as a key factor in the success of digital philanthropy. Transparency in fund reporting enhances public trust. Informants considered real-time reporting crucial. Trust encourages repeat participation. The relationship between managers and donors is horizontal.

Digital social capital is formed through online interactions (Putnam & Garrett, 2021). Without trust, participation declines. Trust is the foundation of solidarity. Social media facilitates transparency. However, the risk of fraud remains, thus requiring governance. These findings align with recent literature. Trust is a central finding of the research.

Communities play a strategic role in digital philanthropy. Community managers act as social mediators. They verify needs and distribute aid. Social closeness enhances legitimacy. Communities maintain the value of solidarity. Informants believe that communities enhance the sustainability of actions. Without communities, campaigns are impersonal. Communities build a sense of collective belonging. Solidarity grows through social relationships. This role aligns with the findings of David and Alampay (2020). Communities are key actors. These findings reinforce the research approach. Community-based digital philanthropy has proven effective.

Donor motivations are multidimensional. Empathy is a dominant factor. Religious and humanitarian values also play a role. Social media reinforces motivation through social recognition (Kim & Kim, 2024). However, some participation is performative. Donations are sometimes influenced by self-image. This phenomenon aligns with the critique of Eikenberry and Turcotte (2021). Nevertheless, the social impact remains real. Solidarity forms despite diverse motives. The complexity of motivations reflects the dynamics of digital social life. Solidarity is not always purely altruistic. However, collective action still occurs. These findings enrich the understanding of digital philanthropy.

Digital philanthropy also contributes to social cohesion across groups. Digital campaigns bring together individuals from diverse backgrounds. Social identities become less relevant. Solidarity is built on shared humanity. Cohesion increases during social crises. However, cohesion is situational. Sustaining cohesion is a challenge. Social media serves as an inclusive space (Castells, 2022). However, algorithms influence the visibility of issues. Popular issues receive more attention, while other needs risk being overlooked. This creates an imbalance in solidarity. These findings indicate structural limitations. Digital social cohesion requires a long-term strategy.

Another challenge is unequal access to technology. Not all groups have digital literacy. The participation of marginalized communities remains limited (Um, 2024). This inequality affects the distribution of solidarity. Furthermore, algorithmic bias affects campaign reach. Digital platforms have a commercial logic. Solidarity has the potential to be distorted. Informants highlighted the need for regulation. Governance is a crucial issue. Without regulation, trust can decline. These challenges highlight the limitations of digital philanthropy.

Digital solidarity is not fully inclusive. Therefore, policy intervention is needed. These findings are practically relevant.

Collaboration between actors strengthens the impact of digital philanthropy. Collaboration between communities, individuals, and institutions increases effectiveness. Collaboration expands the reach of aid. Digital media facilitates coordination. Solidarity is strengthened through collective work. Collaborative networks build social capital (Putnam & Garrett, 2021). Without collaboration, impact is limited. Collaboration enhances social legitimacy. Informants considered collaboration crucial. Collective work strengthens social cohesion. These findings affirm a multi-actor approach. Digital philanthropy is collective in nature. Solidarity grows through synergy.

Digital philanthropy also serves as a means of social learning. Communities learn to manage campaigns more effectively. Organizational capacity increases. Social media becomes a space for collective reflection. The value of solidarity is conveyed through digital narratives. Learning is informal and ongoing. Informants noted an increase in social awareness. Digital philanthropy serves an educational function. Solidarity is strengthened through shared learning. This process enhances social resilience. Social learning supports the sustainability of actions. These findings broaden the meaning of digital philanthropy. Impacts are not only material but also social. Digital philanthropy contributes to social transformation.

The sustainability of digital philanthropy depends on governance. Transparency and accountability are key prerequisites (Saxton & Wang, 2022). Inclusive governance enhances public trust. Government and civil society involvement is essential. Regulation must be adaptive to innovation. Without governance, solidarity weakens. Informants emphasized the need for a healthy ecosystem. Collaborative governance supports sustainability. These findings demonstrate the structural dimension of digital philanthropy. Solidarity does not exist in isolation. Social structures and policies influence practices. Therefore, governance is an important finding. These results are relevant for policymakers.

The findings of this study indicate that digital philanthropy serves as a new medium for building social solidarity. Digital media enables the rapid mobilization of empathy. Solidarity is formed through humanitarian narratives. This finding aligns with the network society theory (Castells, 2022). Solidarity no longer relies on physical proximity. However, digital solidarity is fluid. Sustainability is a key challenge. Communities play a role in maintaining continuity. Thus, digital philanthropy needs to be viewed as a social process, not simply a technological innovation. This finding reinforces recent literature. Digital solidarity is relational. The social context determines the meaning of solidarity. This discussion deepens the theoretical analysis.

The role of trust as social capital confirms the relevance of Putnam's theory. Trust strengthens collective participation (Putnam & Garrett, 2021). Digital transparency enhances legitimacy. This finding is consistent with Saxton and Wang (2022). Trust is the foundation of solidarity. Without trust, social action weakens. Community-based digital philanthropy is more credible. Communities provide social proximity, which strengthens solidarity. This discussion demonstrates the importance of the relational dimension. Solidarity is not built instantly. Social processes determine success. Thus, trust is key. These findings are both practically and theoretically relevant.

The findings on donor motivations demonstrate the complexity of digital solidarity. Empathy is intertwined with identity motives and performativity. This aligns with the critique of Eikenberry and Turcotte (2021). Digital solidarity is not always purely altruistic. However, social impacts still occur. Solidarity can be pragmatic. This discussion emphasizes the need for a critical approach. Digital solidarity is not merely idealistic. The social media context influences behavior. Communities help refine the meaning of solidarity. This discussion enriches the discourse on philanthropy. Solidarity needs to be understood realistically. These findings challenge normative assumptions, thus providing a more balanced analysis.

Social cohesion formed through digital philanthropy is situational. This finding broadens the understanding of digital social cohesion. Cohesion increases during crises but declines afterward. This aligns with contemporary solidarity literature. Social media accelerates the formation of cohesion. However, sustainability requires strategy. Communities play a role in maintaining medium-term cohesion. This discussion highlights the limitations of digital solidarity. Solidarity needs to be supported by social structures. Without structures, cohesion weakens. This finding is important for social policy. Digital cohesion is not automatically sustainable. Therefore, intervention is needed. This discussion deepens the implications of the findings.

The challenges of digital inequality and algorithmic bias indicate the structural limitations of digital philanthropy. This finding is consistent with Um (2024). Not all groups benefit from digitalization. Digital solidarity risks exclusion. This discussion emphasizes the need for inclusive policies. Regulation of digital platforms is necessary. Digital literacy needs to be improved. Without intervention, solidarity is unequal. This discussion connects empirical findings to policy. Digital philanthropy requires a fair ecosystem. Solidarity must be inclusive. Thus, this discussion has practical relevance. Structural challenges need to be addressed seriously. This analysis strengthens policy contributions. Digital solidarity needs to be managed.

The implications of this research show that digital philanthropy has the potential to strengthen social solidarity if managed well. A community-based approach is key. Inclusive governance strengthens trust. Multi-actor collaboration enhances social impact. This discussion integrates theory and findings. Digital philanthropy is not a single solution. However, it is a crucial instrument. Digital solidarity needs policy support. This discussion provides practical direction. This research is relevant for policymakers and practitioners. Thus, the research contribution is applicable. This discussion concludes the comprehensive analysis. Digital solidarity requires social synergy. Conclusions are drawn reflectively.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that community-based digital philanthropy has become an effective medium for strengthening social solidarity in Indonesia, particularly in the post-pandemic era. Digital platforms and social media enable rapid mobilization of aid, broaden participation, and connect people across regions through empathetic narratives. Trust, transparency, and the active role of communities are key factors that sustain participation and strengthen collective action, while collaboration among various actors further enhances the social impact of digital philanthropy.

However, digital philanthropy also faces several challenges, including unequal digital access, algorithmic bias, and risks related to governance and accountability. Donor motivations are diverse, ranging from empathy and humanitarian values to social recognition, showing that digital solidarity is complex and dynamic. Overall, digital philanthropy should be viewed as a social and relational process that requires inclusive governance, community involvement, and policy support to ensure sustainable and equitable social solidarity.

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