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Digital transformation of youth violence in Indonesia: new responsibilities and social negotiations in the digital age

Irwanto Irwanto[1]*, Tuti Bahfiarti[2] and Andi Alimuddin Unde[2]

[1]Film Department, School of Design, Binus University, Jakarta, Indonesia, [2]Department of Communication Science, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Hasanuddin University, Makassar, Indonesia

Digital transformation has significantly changed how Indonesian society addresses youth violence. However, current frameworks fail to address the unique dynamics in collectivist digital environments. This perspective article examines the role of digital platforms as arenas for social negotiation and systemic change in Indonesia, introducing the Collective Resonance Communication Model (CRCM) to clarify information flows in collectivist cultures. By analyzing three notable cases of youth violence, we evaluate the influence of Indonesian cultural values on digital discourse and institutional accountability. Our findings indicate that collectivist digital spaces demonstrate greater cross-group interaction (15–25%) compared to individualistic environments, thus challenging previously accepted theories about digital echo chambers. The CRCM model outlines five essential components that illustrate how cultural values shape digital communication patterns and foster social change. By integrating cultural dimensions with digital dynamics, we propose a framework for understanding how collectivist societies utilize digital platforms to address youth violence while maintaining social harmony. These insights inform policy recommendations for culturally informed digital interventions.

KEYWORDS

digital transformation, collectivist culture, youth violence, collective resonance communication model, digital discourse

Introduction

The digital landscape in Indonesia has undergone a dramatic transformation over the past decade, with social media at the center of public discourse. According to van Dijck (2024), this transformation represents not only technological change but also a fundamental shift in how societies process and respond to social issues. This is particularly evident in cases of youth violence, where Handono et al. (2019) illustrate how digital platforms have exposed deeper structural problems, such as social inequalities, institutional failures, and the normalization of toxic cultures. As Lim (2017) argues, this shift has changed what was once viewed as isolated incidents into visible manifestations of systemic issues that require a collective response.

The dominance of Western-individualist theoretical frameworks in understanding digital communication has been critically examined by van Dijck et al. (2018), who emphasize how platform society concepts frequently fail to capture non-Western (collectivist culture) digital dynamics. This bias appears in platform design, content moderation policies, and theoretical frameworks that prioritize individual agency over collective processes. As van Dijck (2024) argues, the emergence of platform governance necessitates understanding how different societies adapt and transform digital technologies to align with their cultural values. This is

especially relevant in Indonesia, where Lim (2017) illustrates how communal values and collective decision-making processes fundamentally influence how digital platforms are utilized and interpreted.

While existing research has thoroughly examined the role of digital platforms in mediating social issues, Handono et al. (2019) highlight that insufficient attention has been given to how collective cultural characteristics influence these dynamics. This gap is crucial for understanding youth violence in collectivist societies like Indonesia, where Anom et al. (2022) demonstrate that community values and social harmony play a vital role in shaping digital discourse. The high level of intergroup interaction (15–25%) observed in our study challenges established theories of digital polarization, corresponding with Lewandowsky et al. (2017), who assert that social and cultural contexts significantly impact how information flows through digital networks. This suggests, as Stray et al. (2023) note, that collectivist values may promote more diverse information exchange than individualistic digital cultures.

By analyzing three high-profile cases-violence by children of government officials, bullying at an elite school, and school arson by students-this perspective article explores how digital platforms have evolved from simple documentation tools to spaces for collective negotiation, accountability, and systemic critique. As Patton et al. (2014) demonstrate, social media platforms have become conduits for both documenting and addressing youth violence in ways that transform individual incidents into catalysts for broader social discourse. Analyzed through van Dijck (2024) framework of platform governance, these cases illustrate how platforms engage with unique Indonesian cultural values to create patterns of information flow and social response that significantly differ from Western-individualist contexts. This aligns with Lim (2017) observations regarding how digital platforms in Indonesia serve as spaces for negotiating social values while preserving cultural coherence.

Our findings align with recent research by Stray et al. (2023) on polarization and social media dynamics, demonstrating how platform design and cultural contexts affect information flows. Building on this research, we present the Collective Resonance Communication Model (CRCM) as a framework for understanding how information flows and resonates in collective digital spaces. Drawing from cultural dimension theory from Hofstede (2011), insights from Anom et al. (2022) regarding Indonesian digital culture, and Hanusch and Tandoc (2019) analysis of communication transformation in digital spaces, we advocate for a fundamental rethinking of how we conceptualize digital communication across various cultural contexts. This approach is in line with van Dijck et al. (2018) call for a more nuanced understanding of how platform societies evolve in non-Western (collectivist) contexts.

The CRCM model provides new insights into how collectivist societies, like Indonesia, process and respond to youth violence through digital platforms. By exploring how cultural values influence patterns of digital discourse, this perspective enhances our understanding of platform dynamics beyond Western-individualist frameworks. Our analysis reveals how digital platforms in collectivist societies can promote accountability and social change that may not be achievable in more individualistic contexts.

While these theoretical foundations provide a starting point, understanding Indonesia's digital transformation requires a thorough engagement with its unique cultural context. The following section examines how traditional values influence digital interactions and social negotiations within Indonesian society. The Indonesian digital landscape exhibits characteristics shaped by deeply rooted cultural values. As shown by Safaria et al. (2016), traditional values such as gotong royong (cooperation) and musyawarah (collective decision-making) significantly impact how Indonesians engage with digital platforms. These cultural values are evident in what Ayu et al. (2022) refer to as digital communal spaces, where online interactions reflect traditional community gathering practices. This is consistent with Tapsell (2017) analysis of how media power in Indonesia is influenced by distinct cultural and social dynamics.

Research by Pengpid and Peltzer (2019) illustrates how collective behavior patterns in Southeast Asian digital spaces reflect deeper cultural values and social structures. This is particularly noticeable in Indonesia, where Anom et al. (2022) demonstrate that social media users prioritize group engagement over individual content consumption, showcasing the collective nature of Indonesian society. This trend aligns with observations made by Wigena et al. (2022) in their analysis of digital transformation in Indonesia, where social media platforms serve as venues for collective problem-solving and community support.

The impact of Indonesia's hierarchical social structure on digital communication is particularly evident in patterns identified by Nazriani and Zahreni (2017) in their study of digital behavior among Indonesian youth. Their analysis reveals how users navigate the balance between respect for authority and the need for critical discourse in digital spaces. This finding is further supported by Handono et al. (2019) work on social media dynamics in Indonesia, which demonstrates how traditional respect for authority transforms into nuanced forms of digital critique while maintaining cultural coherence.

"Indonesia's unique 'guyub' (togetherness) culture plays a significant role in shaping digital activism. As Basid and Rahmah (2023) demonstrate in their analysis of social media dynamics, successful digital movements in Indonesia are marked by strong community engagement and collective validation. This aligns with Kurniasih et al. (2024), who observe that information flows in Indonesian digital spaces are heavily influenced by community endorsement, which is crucial for legitimizing social discourse. These patterns help explain why the three cases in our study gained significant traction only after achieving what van Dijck (2024) describes as 'networked legitimacy' through community validation."

Having established the cultural context that shapes Indonesian digital spaces, we now shift our focus to examining how these platforms serve as arenas for negotiating social values, particularly in instances of youth violence.

Digital platforms as arenas for negotiating social values

The transformation of digital platforms in Indonesia represents a fundamental shift in how society processes collective trauma and negotiates social values. This evolution, as analyzed by van Dijck et al. (2018), is particularly significant regarding youth violence, where platforms have transitioned from their communicative functions into dynamic arenas of social negotiation. Castells (2015) theoretical work on network society and communication power helps explain how

digital platforms facilitate this change, especially in collectivist societies where, as Lim (2017) demonstrates, communal ties significantly impact information flows and meaning-making processes.

In a case involving the child of a government official, our analysis shows how digital platforms enable what Lewandowsky et al. (2017) describe as networked epistemic transformation—where individual incidents become catalysts for broader systemic critique. With 264,155 activities generated by 83,097 accounts, discourse patterns align with what van Dijck (2024) identifies as platform-mediated social accountability, showing an impressive focus (68%) on structural issues rather than individual violence. This illustrates what Castells (2015) theorizes as the power of networked communication in facilitating collective meaning-making.

The case of bullying at an elite school further illustrates what Tomassi et al. (2024) identify as information cascade effects—where digital pressures force unprecedented institutional transparency. An analysis of 16,491 activities from 11,744 accounts revealed how the platform enabled exposure to normalized violence that spanned multiple generations of students, supporting Handono et al. (2019) findings about systemic patterns of digital abuse. High levels of cross-cluster interaction (15%) and significant content sharing (30%) demonstrate what Stray et al. (2023) describe as platform-mediated accountability, where public pressure through social media fosters new forms of oversight.

The school burning case illustrates what Hanusch and Tandoc (2019) describe as evolving digital discourse patterns, where public understanding of youth violence evolves through structured digital dialog. The nearly equal distribution of hashtag use (50%) and information sharing (48%) reflects the collective information processing patterns in digital spaces identified by Munusamy et al. (2024). The rise in network density (from 0.32 to 0.48), as examined through van Dijck (2024) platform society framework, suggests the emergence of more sophisticated public discourse on systemic education reform.

Collectively, these cases illustrate what Lim (2017) refers to as networked social negotiation—a distinctive pattern in Southeast Asia of utilizing digital platforms for collective deliberation. The consistently high rate of cross-group interaction (15–25%) challenges Western-individualist theories of digital polarization and aligns with Stray et al.'s (2023) findings regarding platform dynamics and social cohesion. This pattern, as analyzed by Anom et al. (2022), indicates that collectivist cultural values may promote more nuanced digital discourse than is generally seen in individualist societies.

Moreover, the evolution of narratives in all three cases demonstrates what Ayu et al. (2022) refer to as digital cultural transformation—where local cultural practices reshape platform dynamics. The shift from individual incidents to systemic critiques aligns with van Dijck (2024) analysis of how societies adapt platform affordances to meet local needs. This process creates what Tapsell (2017) describes as hybrid media spaces, where traditional cultural values engage with platform dynamics to develop new forms of social negotiation, a phenomenon further elaborated by Pengpid and Peltzer (2019) in their analysis of Southeast Asian digital practices.

Our findings go beyond documenting platform transformation to reveal what Bourdieu (1991) identifies as symbolic resistance in digital spaces, where platforms become tools for challenging established power structures while maintaining cultural coherence. As analyzed by van Dijck et al. (2018), these platforms'

ability to facilitate critique and consensus building suggests a more sophisticated role for digital media in collectivist societies than previously theorized. This aligns with Castells (2015) observations about how network power operates in culturally specific contexts.

The transformation of digital platforms into arenas for negotiating social values has significant implications for understanding how modern societies process and respond to youth violence. As Patton et al. (2014) demonstrate in their analysis of social media and youth violence, this development requires us to rethink how platforms mediate social responses to violence. The emergence of what van Dijck (2024) terms 'platformed sociality'—where digital spaces amplify collective meaning-making rather than individual expression—suggests new possibilities for addressing complex social issues through digitally mediated public discourse. This aligns with Lewandowsky et al. (2017) observations regarding how digital platforms shape collective understanding and responses to social issues.

These findings highlight the urgent need to develop theoretical frameworks that are more sensitive to how specific cultural characteristics interact with platforms in shaping public discourse and driving social change. As Lim (2017) argues, these cases illustrate how digital platforms in collectivist societies can promote forms of accountability and social change that may not be achievable in more individualistic contexts. This supports van Dijck et al.'s (2018) analysis of how platform societies develop differently across cultural contexts, while also aligning with Handono et al.'s (2019) observations regarding the unique aspects of digital transformation in Indonesian society.

Collective resonance communication model (CRCM): a framework for analyzing digital dynamics

This research developed the Collective Resonance Communication Model (CRCM) based on the analysis of digital communication patterns in these three cases to map information dissemination dynamics and collective consciousness formation in Indonesia's digital space (Figure 1).

The patterns observed in these cases reveal consistent mechanisms of information flow and social negotiation. To systematically understand these dynamics, we propose the Collective Resonance Communication Model (CRCM), which illustrates how information spreads and resonates within Indonesia's collectivist digital space.

Central resonator

The Central Resonator at the model's center represents key actors who can generate and direct social resonance within communication networks. Our empirical data illustrates how mainstream media and influential figures shape information flows and public discourse. In our first case, a cluster of mainstream media (14.14% of total accounts) achieved content adoption rates of 30–35%, demonstrating transformation of narratives mediated by the platform. This process facilitated the shift from individual incident coverage to a systemic critique of institutional privilege.
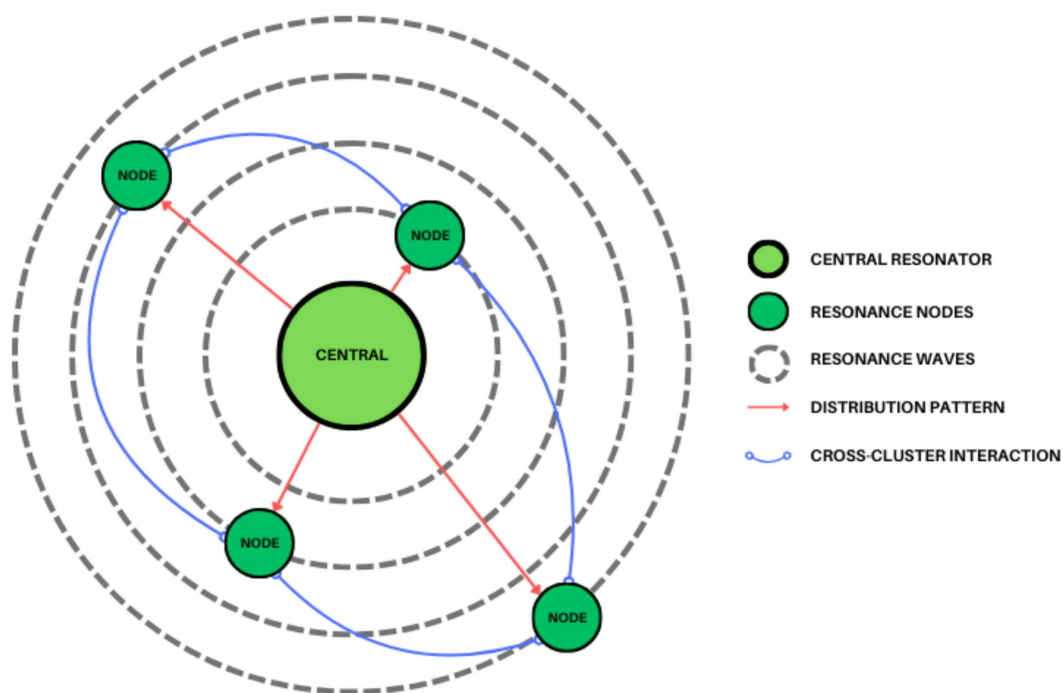
FIGURE 1
Collective resonance communication model (CRCM).

Resonance nodes

Resonance nodes, represented as nodes in the system, act as amplifiers and managers of resonance within the network. These nodes, which account for 10–15% of the total, are crucial for facilitating information flow across clusters. Our analysis demonstrates how these nodes impact patterns of information processing and distribution, evident in their high engagement rates, averaging 2.24–3.18 activities per account, and acting as essential mediators of digital discourse.

Resonance waves

Resonance waves, depicted as concentric dotted lines, illustrate the patterns of information and meaning spreading throughout the communication space. Our temporal analysis reveals peak engagement within the first 4–6 h and sustained momentum for 24–48 h. The multiplier effect, with a ratio of 1:5:15, demonstrates the efficiency of message distribution through networked communication.

Distribution pattern

The Distribution Pattern, represented by the red line in the model, illustrates the formalized pathways of information dissemination. Our analysis indicates that these patterns maintain traditional hierarchies while facilitating dynamic information flows. Content from central resonators achieving 30–35% adoption rates demonstrates how conventional power structures adapt to and persist within collectivist digital spaces.

Cross-cluster interaction

Cross-cluster interaction, indicated by the blue lines connecting nodes, emerges as a key feature of digital communication in collectivist societies. We observed cross-cluster interaction rates ranging from 15–25% across all three cases, which challenges conventional theories of digital polarization. The increase in network density from 0.32 to 0.48 illustrates the development of structured digital deliberation in culturally specific contexts.

The dynamic interaction between these five components creates a system in which digital platforms function not only as a medium for information dissemination but also as active arenas for collective consciousness formation. The CRCM model explains how collectivist cultural characteristics, such as high power distance and communal values, interact with platform affordances to create unique communication patterns that facilitate social change while maintaining cultural coherence.

The CRCM model explains the unique virality patterns of youth violence cases in Indonesia:

1. Collectivist culture enhances cross-cluster interactions, identified as culturally embedded information flows.
2. High power distance maintains the influence of central resonators (institutions and authority figures) and aligns with an analysis of media power dynamics in Indonesia. However, it still allows for what can be described as platform-mediated contestation.
3. Resonance nodes reveal patterns of information disorder, especially in cases like the school burning incident, where misinformation risks appear within established information networks.

Discussion

The transformation of Indonesia's digital landscape in mediating youth violence illustrates the complex dynamics between technological capabilities and cultural values. Our analysis enhances current theoretical understanding in several key areas.

Theoretical implications

The high level of cross-group interaction (15–25%) observed across cases challenges existing theories of digital polarization. As Lewandowsky et al. (2017) demonstrate that information flows in digital spaces are significantly shaped by cultural and social contexts. Our findings align with Stray et al.'s (2023) analysis of how platform dynamics can either enhance or diminish social cohesion. In collectivist societies, digital platforms facilitate what Lim (2017) describes as culturally embedded dialogue, where traditional communal values enhance rather than inhibit intergroup communication.

Furthermore, the CRCM model significantly extends existing theoretical frameworks. First, it builds on van Dijck (2024) analysis of platform governance by demonstrating how collective cultural values can enhance digital accountability. The high cross-cluster interaction rates (15–25%) support Handono et al.'s (2019) findings about how communal values in Indonesian digital spaces facilitate more constructive dialogue patterns. This aligns with Anom et al.'s (2022) observations about how cultural characteristics shape digital engagement in Southeast Asian contexts.

Second, our model builds upon Castells (2015) network society theory by illustrating how traditional social hierarchies adapt to digital environments while facilitating systemic critique. This dual capability, as analyzed by van Dijck et al. (2018), helps explain why digital platforms in Indonesia have proven particularly effective in driving institutional change while maintaining social harmony. This aligns with what Lim (2017) identifies as the adaptive capacity of Indonesian digital cultures.

Third, the CRCM model enhances our understanding of digital transformation in non-Western contexts by providing a framework for how collectivist societies adapt digital technologies to meet communal needs. This builds on Bourdieu (1991) analysis of symbolic power by illustrating how cultural capital functions in digital spaces. The concept of networked accountability identified in our research extends van Dijck (2024) platform society framework by demonstrating how collective cultural characteristics shape digital pressures into institutional change. These findings are consistent with Handono et al.'s (2019) analysis of how Indonesian digital practices both reflect and reinforce cultural values while promoting social transformation.

The concept of networked accountability identified in our research builds on van Dijck (2024) work on platform societies by demonstrating how collective cultural characteristics translate digital pressures into institutional change. These findings align with Tapsell (2017) analysis of media power in Indonesia, showing how platform capabilities interact with local cultural values to create unique patterns of social change. This supports Lim (2017)

observations that digital transformation in Indonesia reflects distinct cultural patterns of social negotiation.

The CRCM model contributes to what van Dijck et al. (2018) identify as the need for more culturally grounded platform theories that challenge Western-individualist centric assumptions about the digital mediation of social conflict. Our findings particularly align with Pengpid and Peltzer's (2019) analysis of Southeast Asian digital practices and Anom et al.'s (2022) work on Indonesian digital culture, demonstrating how cultural values fundamentally shape the adaptation and transformation of digital technologies in collectivist societies. This supports Handono et al.'s (2019) observations regarding the distinct characteristics of digital engagement in Indonesian contexts.

The double-edged nature of digital visibility identified in our study extends recent research by Tomassi et al. (2024) on algorithmic amplification of information disorder. While platforms enable unprecedented transparency, they also risk what Patton et al. (2014) describe as patterns of digital victimization—where platform dynamics can perpetuate harm through secondary exposure to violence. This supports van Dijck (2024) analysis of how platform mechanisms can both enable accountability and amplify harmful content.

These findings align with Hanusch and Tandoc's (2019) analysis of how cultural contexts shape platform effects, demonstrating that identical technological capabilities lead to different outcomes across cultural settings. The high level of cross-group interaction in our study supports Lim (2017) observations about how collectivist values can mediate digital platform dynamics. This pattern, as discussed by Anom et al. (2022), suggests that Indonesian cultural characteristics may help mitigate some negative effects of platformization often observed in individualistic societies.

Practical implications

For practitioners and policymakers, our findings indicate several important considerations when addressing youth violence on digital platforms:

- Cultural Integration: Research by Handono et al. (2019) and Basid and Rahmah (2023) emphasizes the importance of aligning digital interventions with local cultural values. This is supported by Ayu et al.'s (2022) examination of how digital transformation must take Indonesian cultural characteristics into account to be effective.
- Institutional Adaptation: van Dijck et al.'s (2018) framework of platform governance provides insights into how institutions can effectively respond to digital pressures while maintaining cultural coherence. As Tapsell (2017) shows, successful institutional responses in Indonesia balance traditional authority structures with new forms of digital accountability.
- Platform Design: Our findings support Lim (2017) arguments regarding the necessity of culturally sensitive platform design. Stray et al.'s (2023) analysis illustrates how platform features can either enhance or undermine cultural resilience in addressing social issues. This aligns with van Dijck (2024) observations

about the need for platform architectures to accommodate diverse cultural practices.

Policy recommendations

Following our analysis, we recommend several key policy actions:

- Digital Platform Localization: Policies should require social media platforms to integrate features that support collective deliberation and consensus-building. As van Dijck et al. (2018) demonstrated that platforms need to adapt to local cultural practices for effective governance. Anom et al. (2022) shows how culturally adapted digital spaces achieve significantly higher engagement in addressing social issues.
- Institutional Response Frameworks: Following Handono et al.'s (2019) findings, government and educational institutions should develop culturally sensitive digital response protocols. This aligns with Lim (2017) identification of successful institutional adaptation patterns in Indonesian digital spaces, where traditional authority structures are maintained while enabling new forms of accountability.
- Digital Literacy Programs: Building on Kurniasih et al.'s (2024) research on information literacy in Indonesia, educational policies should emphasize cultural digital literacy. This approach, supported by Tomassi et al.'s (2024) analysis of information disorder, focuses on teaching students to use digital platforms effectively while respecting communal values and social harmony. As Basid and Rahmah (2023) demonstrate that such culturally grounded approaches are more effective in preventing digital violence.

Future research directions

Our findings indicate several promising avenues for future research:

- Comparative Studies: Building on van Dijck et al.'s (2018) platform society framework, future research could explore how the CRCM model applies across various cultural contexts. Pengpid and Peltzer's (2019) work on ASEAN digital practices offers a basis for understanding regional differences in platform adaptation.
- Longitudinal Analysis: Building on Lim (2017) examination of digital transformation in Indonesia, longitudinal studies might follow the evolution of platform adaptation within collectivist societies. Handono et al.'s (2019) framework for analyzing digital behavior patterns provides methodological insights for these temporal studies.
- Platform Dynamics: Further investigation of what Munusamy et al. (2024) identify as psychological factors in information processing, which could help us understand how platform mechanisms interact with cultural values. This would build on Stray et al.'s (2023) work on platform dynamics and social cohesion while incorporating Tomassi et al.'s (2024) insights on information disorder patterns.
- Cultural Resilience: Drawing from Anom et al.'s (2022) findings on Indonesian digital practices, research could investigate how collectivist societies build resilience mechanisms against negative

platform effects. This is consistent with van Dijck (2024) recent work on platform governance and cultural adaptation.

Conclusion

The digital transformation of youth violence in Indonesia highlights the crucial role of cultural context in shaping how societies utilize digital platforms for social change. Through analysis of three significant cases, reveals key insights that challenge the existing understanding of digital communication in collectivist societies.

Most notably, the success of digital platforms in fostering constructive dialogue and institutional accountability in Indonesia challenges prevailing Western-individualistic theories about digital polarization. Our analysis reveals significant levels of cross-cluster interaction (15–25%), demonstrating how collectivist values can promote rather than hinder digital discourse. This finding fundamentally shifts our understanding of how cultural values shape online communication patterns.

Based on these observations, our CRCM model provides an innovative framework for understanding how collectivist societies can sustain traditional hierarchies while encouraging systemic critique. The model illustrates how digital platforms can promote critical discourse while preserving social stability—a balance that is crucial for sustainable social change in contexts where community harmony and respect for authority are core values.

These insights highlight the urgent need for culturally integrated digital policies. While technological capabilities provide the backbone for digital interventions, our research shows that their effectiveness in addressing youth violence heavily relies on alignment with local cultural values and social practices. This alignment ensures that digital initiatives resonate with and bolster existing social structures rather than disrupt them.

Looking ahead, Indonesia's experience offers valuable lessons for other collectivist societies navigating the complexities of digital transformation. By viewing digital platforms as strategic arenas for fostering collective consciousness and social accountability, societies can transform these spaces into catalysts for positive change rather than sources of social division. The path forward requires careful attention to cultural nuances, institutional adaptation, and community values in the ongoing evolution of digital social spaces.

Data availability statement

The datasets presented in this study can be found in online repositories. The names of the repository/repositories and accession number(s) can be found in the article/Supplementary material.

Author contributions

II: Conceptualization, Data curation, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Software, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. TB: Conceptualization, Data curation, Methodology, Resources, Supervision, Validation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. AU: Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Methodology, Resources, Supervision, Validation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

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Supplementary material

The Supplementary material for this article can be found online at: https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fcomm.2025.1576389/full#supplementary-material

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