



Bridging Knowledge Gaps in Sexual Violence Prevention among Klaten's Women Organizations

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Abstract

Sexual violence in Indonesia remains a persistent social problem rooted in structural gender inequality, patriarchal norms, and emerging forms of digital violence. This study aims to identify knowledge gaps and evaluate the effectiveness of a capacity-building intervention designed to strengthen women's organizations in preventing sexual violence and supporting victim-centered responses. The study involved 31 women's organizations in Klaten Regency, Indonesia. A quasi-experimental pre-test and post-test design was employed to measure participants' knowledge across four domains: conceptual understanding of sexual violence, recognition of causal factors, victim-friendly prevention and response, and ethical digital campaigning. Data were collected using a structured 20-item questionnaire administered before and after the intervention, and analyzed using descriptive statistical comparison of response proportions. The results indicate notable improvements in several areas. Recognition of structural power imbalance as a cause of sexual violence increased from 77% to 100%, while understanding that physical injury is not a prerequisite for identifying sexual violence rose from 23% to 92%. Participants also demonstrated improved awareness of trauma-informed prevention and the importance of inclusive communication in digital campaigns. However, significant knowledge gaps persisted in recognizing verbal harassment as sexual violence and understanding the ethical implications of using victims' images in digital advocacy. These findings reveal a persistent knowledge-norm gap, where technical knowledge improved but ethical awareness remained limited. The study highlights the need for multi-phase dialogic interventions that combine knowledge transfer with ethical reflection and cultural norm transformation. It also demonstrates the strategic role of women's organizations as grassroots actors in collaborative and survivor-centered governance for sexual violence prevention.

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INTRODUCTION

Sexual violence continues to be a persistent global challenge that undermines efforts to achieve gender equality and social justice. It directly relates to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, which seeks to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, and SDG 16, which emphasizes peace, justice, and strong institutions, particularly in ensuring survivors' access to justice. Despite

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increasing international attention, sexual violence continues to occur in both public and private spheres, reflecting persistent limitations in legal enforcement, institutional responses, and community-level prevention efforts. These conditions highlight the importance of strengthening community-based actors as agents of prevention and support within local contexts.

Sexual violence is widely recognized as one of the most serious forms of gender-based violence globally, including in Indonesia. Its manifestations extend beyond physical assault to include verbal, psychological, and digital forms of abuse that are deeply embedded within social structures, cultural norms, and technological environments (Basile, 2013; Bhattacharya & Singh, 2024). Because of this multidimensional nature, effective prevention requires approaches that combine legal frameworks, community education, and survivor support mechanisms. In many situations, victims first seek assistance from informal or community-level networks, which often serve as the initial entry point for support before formal institutional intervention (Lysova & Hanson, 2023).

These challenges are also reflected in the local context of Klaten Regency, Indonesia. Data from the Department of Social Services, Women’s Empowerment, Child Protection and Family Planning (DINSOSP3AKB) show persistent patterns of sexual violence affecting both children and adult women. Between 2019 and 2023, reported cases of sexual violence against children ranged from approximately 21 to 30 incidents annually, with the highest number recorded in 2021 (see: Figure 1). Although slight decreases were observed in the following years, the overall trend indicates a continued vulnerability of children within the local community.

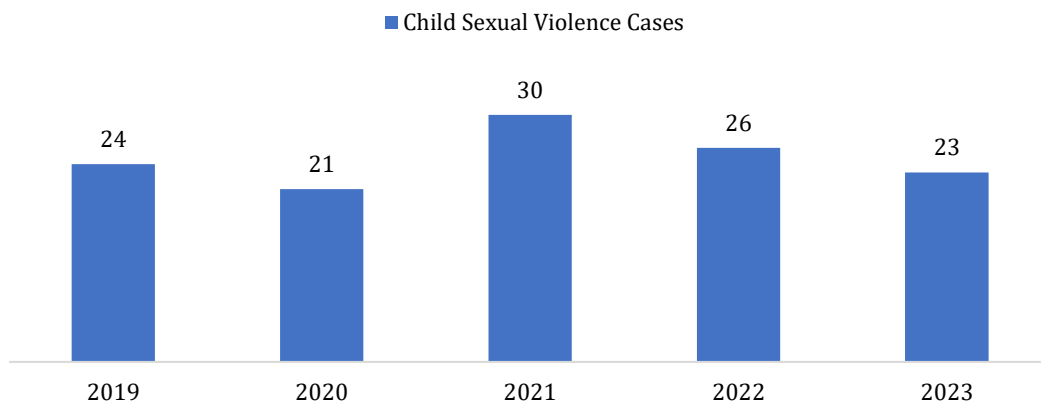


Figure 1. Count of Sexual Violence on Children Cases

Sources: Department of Social Services, Women’s Empowerment, Child Protection and Family Planning (DINSOSP3AKB)

Likewise, the patterns of violence against women in Klaten show some diversity and frighteningly high records. The number of violence against adult women rose to an astonishing high of 35 cases in the year 2022. Such incidents consisted of mostly physical, psychological, and sexual violence. In 2023, there were only 10 reported cases against adult women, but psychological abuses, sexual violence, and neglect remain great threats. The following are the data showing the trend as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Count of Sexual Violence Cases Based on Type of Violence

Type of Violence	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Physical	7	11	4	9	0
Psychological	3	6	6	9	4
Sexual	3	2	3	12	2
Neglect	4	3	6	5	2
Trafficking	0	0	0	0	0
Exploitation	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	2
Total	17	22	19	35	10

Sources: Department of Social Services, Women’s Empowerment, Child Protection and Family Planning (DINSOSP3AKB)

The numbers indicate that both children and adult women in and around Klaten remain highly susceptible to various forms of sexual and gender-based violence. Incident rates remain relatively high and fluctuate over time, limiting the effectiveness of existing prevention strategies and

highlighting the need for more sustainable community-based interventions. To explain these trends, sexual violence should be understood as the outcome of complex multi-level risk factors. The socially ecological framework provides a holistic perspective by examining risk factors across individual, relational, community, and structural contexts (Heise, 1998; Waterman & Edwards, 2022). At the individual level, factors such as hostile masculinity, childhood maltreatment, deviant sexual fantasies, and substance abuse have been identified as contributors to sexual violence perpetration (Chan, 2018; Waterman & Edwards, 2022). Experiences of childhood sexual abuse can increase the likelihood of individuals becoming either perpetrators or victims of sexual violence (Du Mont et al., 2022). At the community level, cultural norms that promote victim-blaming, reinforce patriarchal entitlement, and reproduce rape myths remain significant barriers to prevention (Metheny & Stephenson, 2022; Stephenson et al., 2013), while weak social cohesion and limited institutional responsiveness further reduce community-level protective mechanisms (Naidoo & Sewpaul, 2014; Tcherni, 2011). At the structural level, broader inequalities such as poverty, limited education, weak legal protection, and systemic gender inequalities also contribute to the persistence of sexual violence (Bitzer, 2005; Hardt et al., 2023; Suganya & Vijayakumar, 2025).

In Indonesia, Law No. 12/2022 on Sexual Violence Crimes (UU TPKS) represents an important legal framework for addressing sexual violence. However, challenges related to enforcement, community awareness, and institutional coordination continue to limit its implementation. In this context, women's organizations can play an important role as community-based actors in prevention, advocacy, and victim support. Global studies show that grassroots women's organizations often act as catalysts for community empowerment and survivor assistance (Fried, 2003; Nikupeteri et al., 2022; Quattrochi et al., 2019). In Klaten, organizations such as Bhayangkari, PKK, Persit, Dharma Wanita, Aisyiyah, and Salimah have long contributed to education and advocacy related to gender-based violence. However, pre-intervention assessments conducted in this study revealed several important gaps, including limited understanding of non-physical forms of sexual violence, the persistence of victim-blaming narratives, limited trauma-informed responses, and weak collaboration with external stakeholders such as law enforcement agencies, health services, and local governance institutions.

Digital technologies further shape both the opportunities and risks associated with sexual violence prevention. On the one hand, digital media platforms facilitate public awareness campaigns and community mobilization (Armstrong & Mahone, 2017; Sundstrom et al., 2018). On the other hand, the digital environment has created new forms of violence such as cyberstalking, revenge pornography, and online harassment (O'Neill, 2021; Patalauskaitė, 2024). Ethical digital campaigns must therefore prioritize content safety, avoid re-victimization, ensure inclusion for persons with disabilities, and promote responsible data use (Andreasyan et al., 2024; Mraz, 2022). Preliminary observations in Klaten indicate that although many women's organizations actively use platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook, significant gaps remain in their capacity to design ethical and effective digital campaigns. Digital literacy has therefore become an important empowerment strategy. Participatory training models involving mentorship, peer learning, and mobile-based interventions have proven effective in strengthening digital competencies and gender advocacy skills among women's organizations (Helmi et al., 2025; Hufad et al., 2019; Suwana & Lily, 2017). However, these interventions must also consider differences in education levels, technological access, and local contexts, particularly in rural areas (Gautam & Rai, 2025; Gogoi et al., 2025; Guerrero-Romera et al., 2023).

Beyond individual organizational capacity, effective sexual violence prevention requires collaborative governance involving multiple stakeholders such as law enforcement agencies, health services, educational institutions, media actors, and civil society organizations (Prysmakova-Rivera & Pysmenna, 2021; Riwanto et al., 2023; Shilbury et al., 2016). Collaborative approaches such as Coordinated Community Response (CCR) have demonstrated potential in strengthening victim-centered services and inter-agency coordination (Day & Poarch, 2020; Hetzel-Riggin, 2021; Zijlstra et al., 2018). However, collaboration often faces challenges including institutional fragmentation, power asymmetries, limited resources, and persistent cultural stigma surrounding sexual violence reporting (Hotz et al., 2024; Kolié et al., 2024; Levine, 2018; Ram & Ram, 2023).

Despite increasing attention to trauma-informed care and collaborative governance, most studies focus on formal institutions or urban contexts in developed countries. Empirical research

examining grassroots women's organizations in rural areas of the Global South remains limited (Finkelstein & Markoff, 2012; Macy et al., 2015; Vargas-Moniz et al., 2024). Similarly, although digital literacy is increasingly recognized as an empowerment tool (Suwana & Lily, 2017; Helmi et al., 2025), there is still limited empirical evidence on how grassroots women's organizations apply ethical principles in digital advocacy against sexual violence. This study addresses this gap by examining a community-based intervention designed to strengthen women's organizations in Klaten Regency. Specifically, the study aims to: (1) identify knowledge gaps in understanding sexual violence among women's organizations; (2) evaluate the effectiveness of digital literacy training in improving victim-friendly campaign capacities; and (3) examine the challenges and opportunities of collaborative governance involving women's organizations and other stakeholders in sexual violence prevention.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many types of behaviors including but not limited to sexual or physical assault and even verbal, psychological, digital across many forms of sexual violence (Basile, 2013; Bhattacharya & Singh, 2024). Such multidimensionality has also been appreciated by modern scholars because verbal abuse, threats, voyeurism, coercive control, and cyber-abuses contribute to traumatic experiences yet not exhaustive to the sufferer (Fávero et al., 2022; Lysova & Hanson, 2023). Indeed, while forms of abuse such as sexual harassment, unsolicited verbal sexual comments, and psychological manipulation are often underrecognized, they inflict nothing less than the most grievous psychological and emotional wounds (Fávero et al., 2022; Kedenburg, 2025). Cyber stalking, non-consensual sharing of intimate images, as well as online harassment fall under this added complication of the sexual violence umbrella in digital formats, creating more need for broader preventative frameworks (Bhattacharya & Singh, 2024). Global victimology research has underscored how complicated defining and measuring sexual violence is because of different legal, cultural, and methodologic standards across studies (Scherer & Fisher, 2017; Walklate, 2014).

In fact, one of the social consequences of sexual violence is direct physical harm, of which another would include emotional and psychological impairment; thereby impacting participation in society as well as longer-term functional capacity (Schalk et al., 2023). The effects mentioned imply multi-pronged preventive measures entailing public education, legal reform, and psychosocial support. An ecological frame is how most scholars look at the factors causing sexual violence, as individuals are buried within family, communities, and surroundings (Chan, 2018; Waterman & Edwards, 2022). At individual level, early experiences of abuse, hostile masculine constructs, beliefs supportive of violence, deviant sexual fantasies and substance abuse have rated high among consistently identified risk factors (Chan, 2018; Waterman & Edwards, 2022).

At the level of families, perpetuation of abuse is often in connection with the childhood experiences of sexual violence, exposure to a violent family dynamics atmosphere, and the reinforcement of patriarchal values within social organization of the household (Du Mont et al., 2022). On the community level, norms that tacitly approve of sexual coercion framed within a broader rape culture are enablers of ongoing violence (Metheny & Stephenson, 2022). Weak social cohesion and a lack of peer accountability also operate to improve the responses and prevention mechanisms toward sexual violence (Du Mont et al., 2022). On a structural level, systemic inequalities such as poverty, limited educational access for women, unemployment, and weak institutional protection create a background that renders women's subordination and marginalization normal (Bitzer, 2005; Naidoo & Sewpaul, 2014; Tcherni, 2011). These macro-level determinants remain compounded by the continuing grip of patriarchal norms working through all social, legal, and religious discourses of descent gender relations (Hardt et al., 2023; Suganya & Vijayakumar, 2025). In these structures, in some societies, such as Indonesia, victim access to justice is simultaneously compromised with community efforts directed toward prevention.

Organizations of women are frontline actors addressing sexual violence and filling the gaps that the formal state institutions fail to fill (Nikupeteri et al., 2022; Fried, 2003). These organizations help raise awareness in the community using empowerment models, challenge harmful gender norms, and advocate for equitable policy reforms (Chaudhuri & Morash, 2019; Quattrochi et al., 2019). Programs for empowerment, such as the City of Joy program in the Democratic Republic of Congo, exemplify how survivors' agency and leadership can be reconstructed through participatory

models (Quattrochi et al., 2019). In the meantime, the advocacy services provided by women's organizations, including legal aid, counseling, psychosocial support, and victim accompaniment, have worked to ease victims' trauma and secure their path to justice (Rivas et al., 2016, 2019). The trauma-informed care models are integrated within such services that address survivors needs in a psychological, legal, medical and social manner as a whole (Finkelstein & Markoff, 2012; Lea & Callaghan, 2016; Macy et al., 2015). Their involvement in service delivery is not enough; women organisations mobilize the community by forming networks to establish peer support structures and to interact with a range of community stakeholders so as to foster grassroots accountability (Gram et al., 2023; Vargas-Moniz et al., 2024).

The increased digitalization of public discourse now opens more avenues and at the same time increases vulnerability as regards sexual violence prevention (O'Neill, 2021; Patalauskaitė, 2024). Digital platforms can, on the one hand, enable women's organizations to broaden their audience, campaigns for prevention messages, and indeed amplify the voice of the survivors (Michau & Namy, 2021; Armstrong & Mahone, 2017). On the other hand, unregulated or poorly designed digital campaigns risk unethical exposure of victims, secondary victimization, and further harm (O'Neill, 2021; Andriasyan et al., 2024; Mraz, 2022). Victim-friendly digital campaigns must therefore be built upon ethical foundations that prioritize content safety, prevent re-traumatization, ensure inclusion for persons with disabilities, and promote responsible data practices (Andriasyan et al., 2024; Mraz, 2022; Patalauskaitė, 2024). These principles are especially critical as digital platforms become primary communication tools for both education and advocacy work.

Given these challenges, digital literacy emerges as an essential competency for community-based women's organizations (Helmi et al., 2025; Suwana & Lily, 2017; Hufad et al., 2019). Community-based digital literacy programs that incorporate mentorship, peer learning, and practical hands-on training have proven effective in strengthening digital competencies among women in both rural and urban contexts (Gogoi et al., 2025; Gautam & Rai, 2025; Guerrero-Romera et al., 2023). Additionally, flexible learning models utilizing mobile technology and localized digital storytelling approaches have enabled women's groups to adopt new media formats for victim-sensitive advocacy while respecting survivors' privacy and safety (Gubrium et al., 2019). Ultimately, the complexity of sexual violence prevention necessitates collaborative governance models that bridge sectors and promote shared accountability among multiple stakeholders (Prysmakova-Rivera & Pysmenna, 2021; Riwanto et al., 2023). Collaborative governance emphasizes inclusive participation, power balancing, resource sharing, mutual responsibility, and collective learning principles that directly address the multi-sectoral nature of sexual violence responses (Shilbury et al., 2016).

In practical terms, multi-disciplinary partnerships such as Coordinated Community Response (CCR) and Community Partnership Teams (CPT) have shown measurable success in enhancing service integration, improving victim-centered care, and strengthening institutional collaboration (Zijlstra et al., 2018; Day & Poarch, 2020; Hetzel-Riggin, 2021). However, collaborative governance models face numerous operational challenges including conflicts of interest, inter-agency distrust, resource constraints, and socio-cultural stigmas surrounding sexual violence reporting (Levine, 2018; Hotz et al., 2024; Kolić et al., 2024; Ram & Ram, 2023). Overcoming these barriers requires both capacity-building at the institutional level and deliberate trust-building efforts across sectors

METHOD

This study employed a community-based intervention design aimed at strengthening the knowledge and advocacy capacities of women's organizations in Klaten Regency regarding sexual violence prevention, victim-centered responses, ethical digital campaigning, and inclusive collaborative governance. A quasi-experimental pre-test and post-test design was adopted within a Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) framework (Feyori, 2024; Mindarsih et al., 2024). The intervention followed a four-phase CBPR model inspired by the practices outlined in Feyori (2024) and Mindarsih et al. (2024), consisting of initial engagement, participatory content design, collaborative implementation, and reflective evaluation. The CBPR approach was employed to ensure that the intervention remained contextually relevant, responsive to the needs of participating organizations, and grounded in the lived realities of the communities involved. Such participatory approaches are widely recognized as important for strengthening the sustainability and effectiveness

of sexual violence prevention initiatives at the community level (Nikupeteri et al., 2022; Vargas-Moniz et al., 2024; Prysmakova-Rivera & Pysmenna, 2021).

Participants consisted of 31 individual respondents representing 21 women's organizations actively operating in Klaten Regency. These organizations included women's associations affiliated with community groups, religious organizations, professional networks, and government-related women's organizations. Examples include Bhayangkari, PKK, Dharma Wanita Persatuan, Aisyiyah, Persit Kartika Chandra Kirana, Salimah, Muslimat, IWAPI, Perwari, P2TP2A, and several other local women's community groups. Participants were purposively selected based on their active roles in community advocacy, women's empowerment initiatives, victim assistance, and public education related to gender-based violence. Each organization was represented by individuals occupying leadership or operational roles within their respective institutions, enabling them to translate the intervention outcomes into organizational practices and community activities.

The intervention consisted of four thematic training sessions, each designed to address key areas identified through prior needs assessments and the results of the initial pre-test survey. The first session focused on conceptual clarification of sexual violence, expanding participants' understanding to include not only physical violence but also verbal, psychological, digital, and coercive forms of abuse (Basile, 2013; Fávero et al., 2022; Bhattacharya & Singh, 2024). The second session addressed social-ecological risk factors of sexual violence, deepening participants' understanding of the multiple levels of causal determinants ranging from individual and family contexts to community and structural factors (Waterman & Edwards, 2022; Chan, 2018; Du Mont et al., 2022; Metheny & Stephenson, 2022). The third session focused on victim-centered and inclusive prevention approaches. This session introduced trauma-informed care, ethical victim handling, the advocacy roles of women's organizations, and collaborative networking strategies aimed at strengthening coordination among stakeholders involved in victim protection and support services (Rivas et al., 2016; Michau & Namy, 2021; Lea & Callaghan, 2016; Vargas-Moniz et al., 2024). The fourth session emphasized digital literacy for ethical campaigning. Participants received practical training on designing digital educational content that is victim-sensitive, ethically responsible, inclusive, and accessible, while also addressing issues related to privacy protection and digital media ethics (Helmi et al., 2025; Suwana & Lily, 2017; O'Neill, 2021; Patalauskaitė, 2024). The intervention was delivered through interactive workshops, group discussions, practical exercises, and simulated campaign development sessions, allowing participants to apply newly acquired knowledge within relevant real-life scenarios (Mindarsih et al., 2024). These sessions represent structured stages of learning that were contextually adapted from CBPR-informed training formats used in community-based violence prevention programs (Mindarsih et al., 2024; Nikupeteri et al., 2022).

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of 23 items, administered as both a pre-test and post-test instrument. The questionnaire was designed to assess participants' knowledge, perceptions, and organizational capacities related to sexual violence prevention. The instrument included 20 knowledge assessment items using a true-false format, which were organized into four thematic domains, 1) Conceptual understanding of sexual violence; 2) Knowledge of causal factors of sexual violence; 3) Victim-centered prevention and organizational roles; 4) Ethical and inclusive digital campaigning.

In addition to these knowledge items, three additional indicators were included to capture participants' practical capacities and organizational engagement. One item assessed the types of digital platforms used for advocacy activities, allowing multiple responses (e.g., WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube). Two further items used five-point ordinal scales to measure: (1) participants' perceived capacity in developing digital campaign materials, and (2) the extent of organizational collaboration with government agencies, law enforcement, and victim support institutions. The questionnaire was developed based on indicators used in previous studies on gender-based violence awareness, community empowerment, and digital ethics in advocacy campaigns (Feyori, 2024; Waterman & Edwards, 2022; Bhattacharya & Singh, 2024), and was adapted to the context of grassroots women's organizations in Klaten Regency. Secondary data analysis was also conducted using official reports from the Department of Social Services, Women's

Empowerment, Child Protection and Family Planning (DINSOSP3AKB), which provided contextual information regarding trends in sexual violence cases involving children and adult women in the region. Quantitative data analysis employed descriptive statistical techniques to examine

changes in participants' knowledge and capacity following the intervention. The analysis focused on comparing the proportion of correct responses between the pre-test and post-test results across the four thematic domains, enabling the identification of knowledge improvements as well as persistent misconceptions.

Additional descriptive analysis was conducted to examine patterns in participants' digital advocacy capacities and the level of organizational collaboration with external stakeholders. In line with common practices in applied intervention research using CBPR approaches (Feyori, 2024; Mindarsih et al., 2024), the pre-post comparison was used primarily as an evaluative framework to assess applied knowledge improvements and capacity development, rather than for formal hypothesis testing. All participants voluntarily provided informed consent prior to their participation in the study. Ethical considerations were carefully maintained to prevent any potential re-victimization, ensure confidentiality of participant information, and apply victim-sensitive language throughout both the data collection process and intervention activities, in accordance with ethical guidelines for research on sexual violence (O'Neill, 2021; Andreasyan et al., 2024). Each stage of the intervention was adapted to the socio-cultural context and organizational needs of participants, reflecting the adaptive and iterative nature of community-engaged research as emphasized in CBPR frameworks (Vargas-Moniz et al., 2024; Prysmakova-Rivera & Pysmenna, 2021).

RESULTS

Results are arranged according to the study's main thematic domains: knowledge of sexual violence concepts, understanding of its causal factors, approaches for victim-friendliness in prevention and response, and ethical practices in digital campaign media. Both quantitative and qualitative data are analyzed: pre-test and post-test data supported by observational insights and participants' reflections during the intervention workshops.

The participants did vary considerably about the knowledge levels per se in the pre-test results. A fair amount of basic concepts - for instance, sexual violence, and the need for getting consent - were referred to quite well, but others were very much lacking in both the important point of power dynamics and the strong patriarchy culture impact, as well as ethics in terms of digital campaigning. These differences obviously represent the dissimilar institutional exposure and previous training experiences from the different organizations represented.

Post-intervention, the post-test results indicated notable improvements in participants' knowledge across several domains of sexual violence prevention. As summarized in the comparative results presented in table 2,3,4,5, participants demonstrated increased recognition of structural and cultural drivers of sexual violence, including gender power imbalances and patriarchal norms. Improvements were also observed in participants' understanding of ethical considerations in media-based campaigning, particularly regarding privacy protection and inclusive messaging strategies. However, some misconceptions persisted in specific areas, such as the ethical use of victim images and the rejection of religious justifications that may be used to normalize violence. These patterns suggest that while the intervention contributed to strengthening participants' awareness, certain ethical and normative dimensions require further capacity building and reflective dialogue. The following section presents a comparative analysis of pre-test and post-test responses, including descriptive tables that illustrate patterns of change across the four thematic domains. Each subsection begins with a synthesis of the key pre- and post-test outcomes, followed by interpretation and commentary on their implications. Where relevant, the discussion highlights intersections between the findings and secondary data, including official reports and local service records, to contextualize the urgency and relevance of the intervention. Tables were used to illustrate comparative pre- and post-test scores across thematic domains, while figures captured self-assessed competencies, preferred platforms, and levels of collaboration, dimensions not represented in quantitative scores.

Here, the results underscore the value of a multi-dimensional, community-based approach to strengthening grassroots capacity for sexual violence prevention. By equipping women's organizations with accurate knowledge, ethical tools, and collaborative governance perspectives, the intervention not only enhanced individual understanding but also laid the groundwork for sustainable collective action in a decentralized context such as Klaten.

Analysis of Knowledge Improvement on Sexual Violence Concept

First, to provide a clearer picture of how participants' understanding of sexual violence evolved through the intervention, Table 2 presents a comparative summary of pre-test and post-test scores across five key indicators. These results offer a foundation for assessing the effectiveness of the conceptual module in clarifying the definition, forms, and boundaries of sexual violence.

Table 2. Comparative Knowledge Improvement on Sexual Violence Concept

Question	Pre-Test (%)	Post-Test (%)	Change (%)
Q1. General Definition of Sexual Violence	90	96	6
Q2. Physical Injury as Requirement	23	8	-15
Q3. Verbal Abuse as Violence	97	96	-1
Q4. Cyber Sexual Violence	100	100	0
Q5. Physical Contact Without Consent	97	92	-5

Sources: Authors Analyses. 2025

The pre-test results indicate a mixed understanding among participants regarding the fundamental concept of sexual violence. While 90% of respondents correctly identified that sexual violence involves acts that degrade, harass, or attack a person's body or reproductive function, only 23% understood that physical injury is not a prerequisite for recognizing sexual violence (See: Table 2). Moreover, although 97% recognized verbal abuse as a form of violence, a notable misconception persisted: 10% still failed to correctly identify this form, and a concerning 19% did not understand the general definition of sexual violence in applied contexts (e.g., community cases). Post-test results, however, revealed significant improvement. Recognition that physical injury is not a necessary condition increased to 92%, and comprehension of the general definition reached 96%. These improvements reflect the effectiveness of the conceptual module, which emphasized the broad spectrum of violence including physical, verbal, psychological, economic, and digital forms as articulated by [Fávero et al. \(2022\)](#) and [Basile \(2013\)](#).

Particularly striking was the correction of the misconception that sexual violence must result in visible harm. This belief rooted in both cultural and legal biases has historically led to underreporting and misclassification of psychological and verbal abuse ([Du Mont et al., 2022](#)). The intervention addressed this by presenting multidimensional typologies of violence, supported by visual and narrative case examples. Participants were encouraged to engage in group discussions, analyzing hypothetical situations that did not involve physical contact but clearly constituted coercive or degrading behavior. This participatory learning model aligns with [Vargas-Moniz et al. \(2024\)](#), who argue that effective community education must move beyond legalistic definitions and integrate lived experiences and local interpretations to shift attitudes.

Another key conceptual shift occurred in the understanding of cyber sexual violence. From the outset, awareness of online harassment was high, with 100% of respondents correctly identifying it as a form of sexual violence. However, qualitative discussions revealed a narrow interpretation, often limited to explicit imagery or overt messages. Post-intervention reflection showed a more nuanced comprehension that included subtle forms such as unsolicited friend requests, location tracking, or threatening comments phenomena also described in [O'Neill's \(2021\)](#) work on digital sexual risk and in [Suwana and Lily \(2017\)](#) regarding women's vulnerability in Indonesia's online spaces.

Nevertheless, not all areas saw perfect transformation. A small percentage (4%) still failed to recognize verbal threats and emotional coercion as sexual violence, reflecting deeper social conditioning that normalizes aggressive speech in certain gendered contexts. This lingering misconception underscores the challenges highlighted by ([Michau & Namy, 2021](#)), who argue that transforming deeply held beliefs about gender and violence requires sustained, multi-stage interventions rather than one-off training sessions.

Here, the quantitative and qualitative evidence demonstrates that conceptual clarity significantly improved post-intervention. Participants transitioned from partial or stereotype-laden understandings to a more inclusive, rights-based framework of sexual violence. This foundational shift is essential for equipping women's organizations to become both accurate educators and empathetic first responders in their respective communities. These results confirm that while conceptual understanding increased, ethical blind spots such as verbal abuse recognition remain a persistent gap, highlighting the need for multi-phase interventions. Future modules should integrate

reinforcement exercises, scenario-based testing, and value clarification tools to ensure that shifts in knowledge are internalized and translated into organizational practice.

Analysis of Knowledge Improvement on Factors Causing Sexual Violence

Then, to assess how participants' understanding evolved regarding the underlying causes of sexual violence, five core questions were posed on themes such as power imbalance, patriarchal norms, peer influence, and religious misinterpretation. Table 3 presents the pre- and post-test comparison to trace the extent of conceptual shifts brought about by the intervention.

Table 3. Comparative Knowledge Improvement on Factors Causing Sexual Violence

Question	Pre-Test (%)	Post-Test (%)	Change (%)
Q6. Power Imbalance	77	100	23
Q7. Clothing as a Cause	77	8	-69
Q8. Patriarchal Culture	94	100	6
Q9. Peer Pressure	97	96	-1
Q10. Misinterpretation of Religion	97	92	-5

Sources: Authors Analyses. 2025

The intervention produced mixed outcomes in participants' comprehension of the underlying causes of sexual violence as shown in Table 3. On Q6, which asked whether power imbalance between men and women contributes to sexual violence, the proportion of correct responses increased from 77% in the pre-test to 100% in the post-test, indicating a +23% gain. This reflects a growing recognition among participants of structural gender inequality as a foundational driver of sexual violence an insight supported by feminist scholarship that links gendered power hierarchies to higher risks of abuse (Flood, 2020).

In contrast, Q7 revealed a severe setback. Only 8% of post-test respondents correctly rejected the notion that clothing causes sexual violence, down from 77% in the pre-test a staggering -69% decline. This suggests that the session either failed to deconstruct victim-blaming narratives or inadvertently reinforced them. Similar reversals have been observed in interventions that address sexual violence myths superficially without critical engagement or facilitated discussion (McMahon & Banyard, 2012). The result indicates an urgent need to revise the module to include more deliberate myth-debunking strategies and survivor-centered perspectives.

Encouragingly, Q8 regarding the role of patriarchal culture saw improvement from 94% to 100%, a +6% shift, affirming that participants deepened their understanding of how gendered social systems normalize control and subordination. The framing of patriarchy as a cultural system not merely individual male behavior mirrors global efforts to situate violence within broader gender norms (Jewkes et al., 2015). Responses to Q9, which addressed peer pressure, remained steady: 97% in the pre-test and 96% in the post-test, suggesting that participants already held accurate beliefs about the role of peer influence in enabling harmful behaviors. Such high baseline knowledge may reflect the everyday visibility of peer dynamics in community life, as also reported in youth-focused prevention studies (Taylor et al., 2013).

Finally, Q10 measured participants' awareness that misinterpretation of religion can legitimize violence. Here, accuracy slightly declined from 97% to 92% (-5% change). Although the post-test score remains high, the drop implies that sensitive theological themes must be approached with both nuance and clarity. As Bhattacharya and Singh (2024) emphasize, community interventions in religious settings should use dialogic pedagogy and progressive interpretations that align religious principles with human rights.

These findings point to both progress and setbacks. While structural drivers like patriarchy and power imbalance are better understood, persistent myths particularly around clothing still influence community thinking. Addressing these gaps requires a deeper integration of socio-cultural theory, lived experience, and strategic communication methods within future training iterations. It also necessitates engaging participants in reflective exercises to shift internalized beliefs and connect abstract concepts to local contexts and policies (Nikupeteri et al., 2022; Prysmakova-Rivera & Pysmenna, 2021).

Analysis of Knowledge Improvement on Victim-Friendly Prevention and Handling

Moreover, to measure participants' understanding of victim-centered prevention and handling, five questions were asked addressing themes such as sexuality education, family protection, the role of women's organizations, and cross-sector collaboration. The comparative results of pre- and post-test responses are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Comparative Knowledge Improvement on Victim-Friendly Prevention and Handling

Question	Pre-Test (%)	Post-Test (%)	Change (%)
Q11. Early Sexuality Education = Promiscuity	10	17	7
Q12. Parents Improve Child's Confidence	97	100	3
Q13. Warm Family Prevents Sexual Violence	100	100	0
Q14. Women Organizations for Victim Assistance	100	100	0
Q15. Collaboration with Stakeholders	100	100	0

Sources: Authors Analyses. 2025

The intervention brought notable gains in participants' knowledge and perspectives related to trauma-informed, victim-friendly approaches to prevention and response (See: table 4). In the pre-test stage, participants already demonstrated relatively high recognition of key principles, with 100% correctly identifying the importance of family warmth (Q13), parental support (Q12), and the role of women's organizations in assisting survivors (Q14). Similarly, the need for multi-stakeholder collaboration (Q15) was universally acknowledged. These findings reflect the strong communal and caregiving values embedded within Indonesian women's organizations (Mindarsih et al., 2024).

Post-test results confirmed the stability of this baseline understanding, with all participants maintaining correct responses across those four items. However, deeper analysis reveals that although these concepts were already known, the intervention allowed participants to develop a more structured, system-level comprehension of what "victim-friendly" truly entails. This includes recognizing the difference between supportive intentions and trauma-informed practice a distinction widely emphasized in current scholarship (Rivas et al., 2016)

One key example is the clarification around early sexuality education (Q11). In the pre-test, only 38.7% disagreed with the statement that early sex education leads to promiscuity a common moral panic in conservative settings (Patalauskaitė, 2024). After the intervention, the correct response rate jumped to 79.2%. This shift highlights how reframing sex education through a rights-based, child-protection lens helped participants overcome initial discomfort. Such improvement aligns with the global consensus that comprehensive sexuality education is critical in violence prevention, especially when it emphasizes bodily autonomy, boundary-setting, and respectful relationships from an early age. Qualitative reflections further illustrate the effect of this reframing. Several participants noted that prior to the workshop, they felt early sexuality education was "inappropriate" or "too Western," but now recognized its protective function, especially when delivered in age-appropriate, culturally respectful formats. This learning underscores how participatory discussion not just information delivery was vital in shifting attitudes.

The module was practical with tools to aid in embedding victim-friendly principles into organizational life. Role-play and case simulations helped in drama exploration for participants with real-life scenarios of disclosure, emotional distress, or barriers to the institution in their reporting. Exercises were grounded on principles of trauma-informed safety, trust, empowerment, and culture responsiveness (Lea & Callaghan, 2016). As a result, there was increased confidence in distinguishing among victim-blaming responses and affirming, supportive communication. The study, however, has brought up the issue of professional development continuing in an earlier phase. Most participants could now define trauma-informed care and name some of the important behaviors it encompasses, such as listening non-judgmentally and offering safe spaces, but they lacked the deeper technical competencies in referral procedure, legal framework, or inter-agency coordination protocols. As mentioned in the Nikupeteri et al. (2022) article, victim-friendly services go beyond empathy—they entail an entirely structured, institutionalized support system, backed by policy and training. Here, the intervention successfully consolidated participants' foundational understanding of victim-friendly approaches and introduced critical new perspectives that challenge stigma and moralism. However, to translate this awareness into consistent practice, especially in frontline advocacy and

assistance, further structured training, institutional support, and inter-organizational coordination will be essential.

Analysis of Knowledge Improvement on Education & Inclusivity Campaign Media

Others, to examine how well participants understood the principles of ethical and inclusive educational campaigning, five questions addressed the use of accessible language, consent in photo usage, disability inclusion, content sensitivity, and community engagement. Table 5 below presents the comparative pre- and post-test results.

Table 5. Comparative Knowledge Improvement on Education & Inclusivity Campaign Media

Question	Pre-Test (%)	Post-Test (%)	Change (%)
Q16. Simple Language for Campaign	100	100	0
Q17. Using Victim Photo without Consent	10	17	7
Q18. Disability Access in Campaigns	100	100	0
Q19. Avoiding Triggering Content	97	96	-1
Q20. Involving Local Communities	100	96	-4

Sources: Authors Analyses. 2025

The greatest part of the change in knowledge and attitudes among participants has been in the area of ethics pertaining to digital campaigns and inclusive communication strategies. Prior to the intervention, there was considerable confusion and misinformation on the ethical principles of media production in the context of sexual violence prevention (See: Table 5). For example, only 10% of the participants knew correctly that using a survivor's photo without consent-even supposedly educationally-is unethical and possibly re-traumatizing (Q17). This has risen only slightly to 17% post-test, indicating that while awareness has developed, misunderstanding of consent and digital ethics remains deeply entrenched. These results illustrate the more general challenge such grassroots advocacy is facing: aligning it with global standards on victim privacy and ethical media use (O'Neill, 2021; Patalauskaitė, 2024).

The participants exhibited an opposite tendency regarding items relating to inclusivity and accessibility, demonstrating a high level of understanding during the post-test. All participants (100%) confirmed that campaign materials should enable persons with disabilities (Q18) and that any images used in the visual content must not trigger traumatic memories for survivors (Q19). These principles are essential in trauma-informed communication and correspond to contemporary trends in inclusive advocacy, as noted by UNESCO and other global entities (Helmi et al., 2025). In conjunction with that, 96% of participants agreed that in ideal campaigns, the inclusion of local community leaders (Q20) is vital, indicating the need for cultural references in messaging to gain grassroots support.

In addition to the pre- and post-test results, participants were asked to self-assess their competency in designing digital campaign materials related to sexual violence. The distribution of responses is presented in Figure 2.

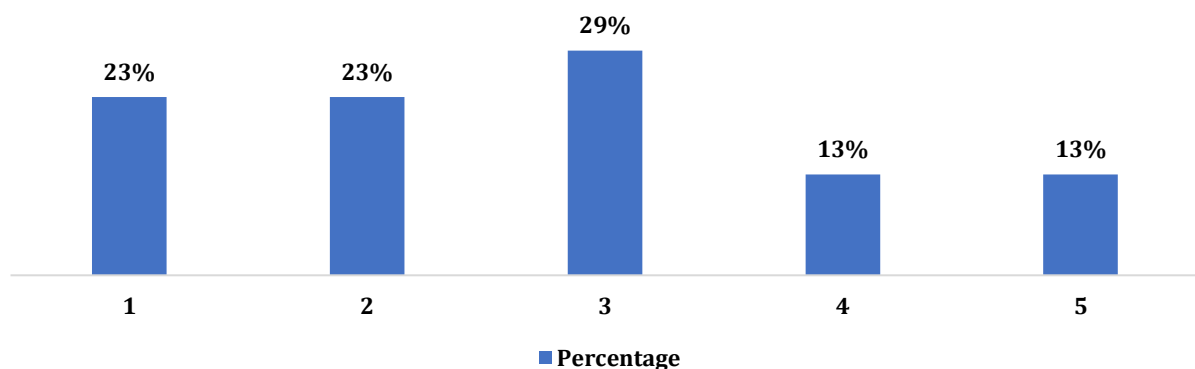


Figure 2. Self-Assessed Digital Competency of Participants in Designing Anti-Sexual Violence Campaign Materials. Sources: Authors Analyses. 2025

A more in-depth analysis of the pre-test data indicates that while all interviewees considered campaign language should be simple, clear, and culturally sensitive (Q16), they tended to be less confident in their own technical capabilities to produce such content. Only 13% rated their ability to create campaigns high (4 or 5), while 46% rated their abilities low (1 or 2) as shown in figure 2. This gap in skill acquisition was addressed through practical modules focusing on digital content development, platform-specific engagement (such as Instagram and WhatsApp), and privacy-preserving practices. To better understand the digital channels most frequently used by women's organizations in conducting educational campaigns and institutional activities, participants were asked to identify their preferred social media platforms. The results are presented in Figure 3.

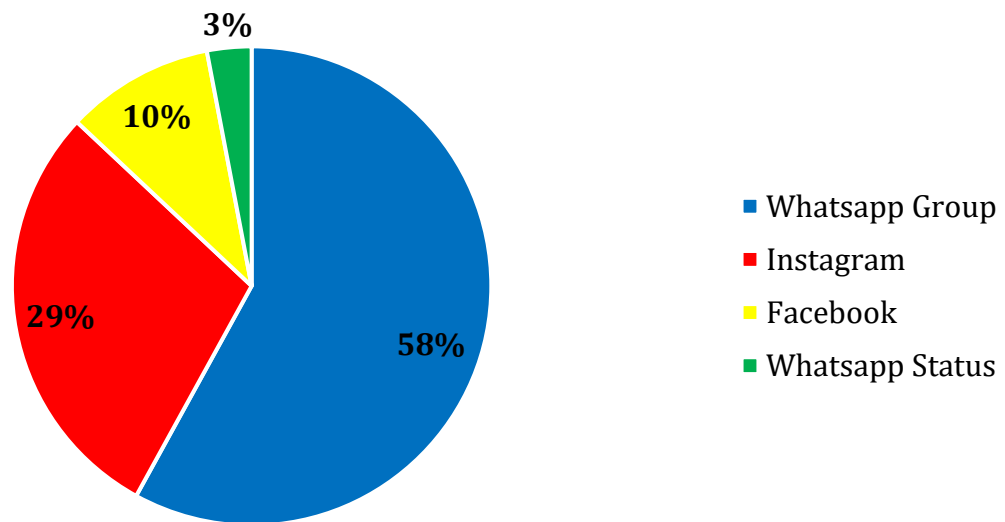


Figure 3. Distribution of Preferred Social Media Platforms Used by Women's Organizations for Educational Campaigns and Organizational Activities.

An interesting finding that came out of analysis on the digital habits of participants was that 58% thereof mainly use WhatsApp Groups for organizational communications and campaigns, followed by 29% using Instagram and 10% using Facebook (See: Figure 3). This shows how informal, peer-to-peer networks have an important place when it comes to meaning making in terms of digital civic advocacy within demi-urban contexts such as Klaten. This is therefore how the training channels its tools to the platforms by emphasizing short messaging and visual clarity with ethical content customizations targeted at mobile first audiences. Such are the likes of [Suwana and Lily \(2017\)](#) who argue that digital civic engagement in Indonesia is largely facilitated through informal mobile-based networks with very little contribution from institutionalized platforms.

Even with improvement, there is little enhancement in ethical media awareness (e.g. Q17) as there might be a need for continued discourse and institutional commitment. Many feel confused over what is ethical storytelling, especially while raising public consciousness and maintaining dignity to the survivor. This tension resonates in the literature warning against using "shock value" or voyeuristic narratives in campaigns about gender violence ([O'Neill, 2021](#)).

Moreover, this study also looking at the level of involvement of women's organizations in Klaten in multi-stakeholder collaboration related to the prevention and handling of sexual violence as shown in Figure 4. The data shows that as many as 42% of organizations have only been invited as participants, without an active role in decision-making or program design. This indicates that almost half of the organizations do not yet have a strategic position in the collaboration system. Meanwhile, 29% are occasionally involved in campaigns or socialization, reflecting partial participation but have not touched on aspects of policy coordination or advocacy. As many as 10% have never even been involved in any form of collaboration, indicating barriers to access or institutional exclusion. On the other hand, 13% have played an active role in program formulation or policy advocacy, and only 6% are routinely involved in policy coordination or regional governance. This small proportion indicates that the role of women's organizations in multi-actor governance is

still very limited structurally and functionally. This finding emphasizes the need to strengthen institutional capacity, more systematic involvement, and the formation of inclusive collaborative mechanisms so that women's organizations can transform from passive participants to strategic actors in the ecosystem for preventing sexual violence at the regional level. Here, ethical, inclusive communication about disability, trauma-informed content, and cultural resonance has moved forward by leaps and bounds. However, the study suggests that greater engagement with digital ethics, applied skills in media design, and real establishment of ethical review processes are required for grassroots organizations. To explore the extent of women's organizations' engagement in multi-stakeholder collaboration for sexual violence prevention and response, participants were asked to indicate their level of involvement in cross-sectoral initiatives. The distribution is illustrated in Figure 4.

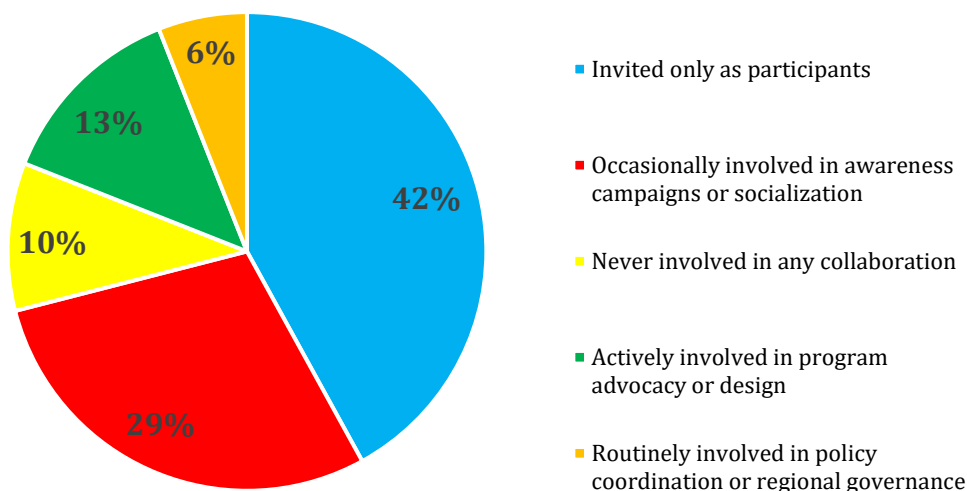


Figure 4. Levels of Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration in Sexual Violence Prevention and Response.

DISCUSSION

These results of capacity-building intervention give vast empirical insights on both the strengths and still-existing weaknesses in the knowledge structures of women's organizations in Klaten regarding areas of sexual violence prevention, women-sensitive response, and ethical digital campaigning. The mixed improvement-stagnation patterns across the various domains reflect the complexities of knowledge acquisition within such strongly entrenched sociocultural conditions, and frame both individual cognition and institutional practices in Indonesia.

The immediate success of the intervention is that most cognitive domains show significant advance in terms of technicality and conceptualization about sexual violence. The participants were improved in recognizing sexual violence beyond the acts of physical nature to cover a wide range of abuse such as coercive control and digital harassment (Basile, 2013; Bhattacharya & Singh, 2024). Such an attitudinal transformation is consistent with the literature highlighting the necessity of community-based interventions through structured pedagogy and participatory approaches to shape and displace rigidly-held notions (Nikupeteri et al., 2022; Quattrochi et al., 2019).

Definitional clarity improved substantially, however, for the forms of violence, physical or cyber, while verbal harassment remains a deep, normative blind spot. Complete failure to classify verbal harassment as sexual violence is consistent across pre-test and post-test data. This illustrates a deep-rooted cultural trivialization of non-physical aggression, often lived out in the course of everyday interactions and normalized within local social scripts (Kedenburg, 2025; Lysova & Hanson, 2023). What these findings suggest is that cultural norm shifts addressing the highly internalized social tolerance toward nonphysical violations are concomitant to knowledge dissemination needed in public definitions of sexual violence.

The intervention also did serve to somewhat exacerbate the participants' understanding of the multilayered causal factors of sexual violence in accordance with ecological frameworks that identify structural inequalities, patriarchal systems, peer pressure, and perverse religious interpretations as major risk factors (Waterman & Edwards, 2022; Chan, 2018; Metheny & Stephenson, 2022). Yet, the partial retention of narratives that blame women for sexual violence predominantly concerning the women victims' attire, and the residual unease in candidly articulating patriarchal systems as a fundamental driver of this violence, indicate a formidable ideological resistance that is preserved firmly within the community's worldviews (Walklate, 2014; Nainar, 2022; Hardt et al., 2023). The sharp decline in Q7 suggests that the module may have unintentionally reinforced victim-blaming. This calls for a redesign of the learning approach with more interactive myth-deconstruction and survivor narratives. Thus, these unyielding beliefs reaffirm prior conclusions that cultural and normative shifts in gender-based violence prevention are non-linear processes that demand value-challenging educational engagements characterized by dialogue and iteration (Suganya & Vijayakumar, 2025).

These findings have also been validated through qualitative discussions with local stakeholders in the field. They describe, again and again, the salience of Klaten's sexual violence landscape as a phenomenon "*gunung es*", because reported cases do not nearly approach the incidence levels but are the echoed results of fear of victimization, family honor preservation, and cultural mechanisms of silencing with which report is subjected. That systemic underreporting is not only culprits in institutional capacity but also in barriers of a socio-cultural kind, which hinders disclosure, mainly in cases of intra-familial abuse (incest) and multiple-victim violence (Scherer & Fisher, 2017; Kolié et al., 2024).

Fortunately, in the area of trauma-informed prevention and handling, participants demonstrated strong understanding on parenting roles, security from psychological harm, and collaborative institutions (Rivas et al., 2016; Vargas-Moniz et al., 2024). One-fifth of participants, though substantially influenced by prevailing beliefs regarding sexual instruction, continued to cling to the misconception that it leads to sexual permissiveness. Despite the fact that stakeholders in field discussions have voiced that parents are still uncomfortable discussing bodily autonomy and reproductive rights with children, these same participants highlight the complexity of dealing with generational value conflict within conservative family settings (Bitzer, 2005; Du Mont et al., 2022). The earliest attitude that gives most concern is the inability of the participants to grasp, as a matter of ethics, the privacy rights of the pictures of victims for digital campaigns. Instead, it is notable that, after modules that covered digital ethics, 100% of the participants constantly failed to indicate that distributing victims' images without consent would constitute a secondary form of victimization (O'Neill, 2021; Andriyana et al., 2024). This moral blind spot resonates with qualitative descriptions from field discussions when community organizations admitted to using titillating pictures to boost digital engagement without a complete appreciation of ethical and legality ramifications. Ethics are seriously threatened because of the gap in knowledge that needs immediate intervention through special training in survivor-centered digital advocacy, informed consent, and privacy safeguards (Helmi et al., 2025; Patalauskaitė, 2024). Unlike previous intervention studies that mainly focus on increasing awareness, this study reveals a critical knowledge-norm gap, particularly in ethical digital campaigning. The finding that 83% of participants remained unaware of consent-related photo ethics post-training underscores a blind spot in existing models. This highlights the need for ethics-centered modules, which is a novel contribution to community-based anti-violence capacity-building discourse in the Indonesian context.

These findings taken together suggest cognitive advancement in technical knowledge may be a possible outcome of a short-term intervention; however, changes to normative and ethical behavior become much more complicated. The Klaten case reinforces the assertion made by many that preventing sexual violence must involve not only the active transfer of knowledge but also a deep set of cultural, ethical, and organizational changes. Future capacity-building programs should move towards a longer model of learning involving multiple phases, combining cognitive modules with reflexive normative dialogues, ethical dilemma simulations, regulatory knowledge of survivor-related casework, and collaborative casework (Michau & Namy, 2021; Vargas-Moniz et al., 2024).

Importantly, the findings further reaffirm the potential strategic role of these women's organizations as collaborative governance actors within the regional anti-violence systems (Riwanto

et al., 2023; Prysmakova-Rivera & Pysmenna, 2021). With strengthened ethical awareness and contextualized technical capacity, women's organizations can become not only service providers but also governance stakeholders who advance policy reforms, institutional coordination, and survivor-centered advocacy. This empirical evaluation thus offers both diagnostic evidence of current cognitive baselines and a policy roadmap for sustainable capacity-building within Indonesia's community-driven sexual violence governance landscape. Despite these contributions, several limitations of this study should be acknowledged. First, the intervention involved a relatively limited number of participants (31 individuals representing women's organizations in Klaten Regency), which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other regional contexts. Second, the quasi-experimental pre-post design relied primarily on descriptive comparison without a control group, which limits the ability to attribute observed changes exclusively to the intervention. Third, the evaluation focused mainly on short-term cognitive improvements rather than long-term behavioral or institutional transformation within the participating organizations. Future research could therefore expand the scope of participants, incorporate longitudinal evaluation designs, and examine how knowledge improvements translate into sustained organizational practices and policy engagement in sexual violence prevention.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates the impact of a capacity-building intervention in strengthening the knowledge and strategic capacity of women's organizations in preventing gender-based violence. Improvements were observed in understanding structural causes of violence, trauma-informed victim response, and the design of inclusive and ethical digital campaigns. These findings demonstrate that women's organizations can play a strategic role in collaborative governance systems for sexual violence prevention. They can contribute not only to community prevention efforts but also to victim support and public advocacy. However, the findings do show some matters that remained as questions without resolution. Certain normative assumptions, such as minimizing verbal harassment, arguing through patriarchal internalized structures, or boundaries of victim privacy in digital advocacy, were untouched by these initiatives. Evidence exists that these otherwise blind spots indicate that knowledge will not suffice. Responses to sexual violence transformation also requires value-based education and moral discourse. This means that in practice, future interventions should go beyond technical transmission knowledge, and be designed in multi-phase learning models that would integrate legal literacy, cultural critique, and ethical reasoning beside participatory dialogical methods. Application of such an approach would provide women's organizations with sustainable tools for ethically-grounded, survivor-centered, and culturally sensitive strategies. Ultimately, this intervention is an offering of a tested foundation and forward-looking blueprint for the prevention of gender-based violence in an inclusive and collaborative framework for governance on the community level.

AUTHORS CONTRIBUTIONS

IDAN contributed to the conceptualization of the study, research design, methodological framework, supervision of the research process, and manuscript review and editing. SS contributed to data collection, field coordination with women's organizations, data curation, and preliminary data analysis. RHH contributed to the development of research instruments, methodological support, and validation of analytical procedures. AWEM contributed to statistical analysis, data interpretation, and visualization of the research findings. SY contributed to the literature review, drafting of the manuscript, and language editing.

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