



# **To what extent did social media and communication strategies help victims of domestic violence during the COVID-19 lockdown in Thailand?**

*A case study of the “Stop Violence Against Women” campaign.*

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## **Abstract**

In the midst of the formidable challenges imposed by the COVID-19 lockdown, the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign emerged as a resilient and proactive response, harnessing the influential capabilities of social media and strategic communication to combat the pervasive issue of gender-based violence in Thailand. This comprehensive study, deeply rooted in the realms of public sphere theory, development theory, and digital activism, explores the multifaceted dimensions of the campaign's profound impact. Through an extensive examination of its strategies, narratives, and outcomes, this research illuminates how the campaign adeptly leveraged social media platforms to heighten awareness, promote inclusivity, and empower victims during a period of elevated vulnerability.

In pursuit of a holistic comprehension, this study navigates the theoretical foundations that steered the campaign's conception and implementation. Within the contours of public sphere theory, the campaign effectively transformed digital spaces into virtual town squares, where individuals could congregate, deliberate, and amplify their voices on the pressing issue of gender-based violence. Through compelling visuals, strategic hashtags, and resonant narratives, the campaign transcended geographical boundaries, nurturing empathy, and galvanizing action within a global audience.

Inclusivity stood as a central tenet of this endeavor, intricately interwoven with the campaign's strategic alliances and dialogues involving diverse stakeholders. By amplifying marginalized voices and orchestrating participatory development, the campaign evolved into a dynamic crucible, where diverse perspectives converged to drive profound societal transformation. The campaign's harmonious engagement with development theory further fortified its impact, addressing not only the social but also the economic repercussions of gender-based violence while fostering a participatory ecosystem wherein survivors, allies, and advocates coalesced in unity.

At the heart of this transformative narrative lies digital activism—a paradigm of empowerment that united stakeholders in a harmonious symphony of awareness, empathy, and advocacy. In alignment with the principles of public sphere theory, digital activism emerged as an influential force for socio-political change, transcending the confines of the virtual realm to manifest tangible policy shifts and instigate societal change.

This study diligently uncovers not only the campaign's remarkable accomplishments but also the challenges it encountered, providing valuable insights into the intricacies of harnessing social media and communication strategies to combat gender-based violence. Woven together through a rich tapestry of theoretical frameworks, narratives, and strategies, the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign stands as an enduring testament to the compelling impact of theory-infused activism, engendering profound transformations in the domain of gender-based violence awareness and prevention.

Keywords: Gender-based violence, social media, public sphere theory, development theory, digital activism, inclusivity, strategic communication, COVID-19 lockdown, Thailand.

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# **1. Introduction**

Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a pressing global concern, with significant repercussions, especially for women and girls. According to the World Health Organization, one in three women worldwide has experienced physical or sexual violence, frequently at the hands of intimate partners. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this issue, leading to a surge in domestic violence cases (UN Women, 2020, p. 3).

To address this problem, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) advocates for a unified definition of domestic violence to guide global efforts (UNFPA, 2021a, p. 9). For the purposes of this research, GBV is defined as "violence directed against an individual based on their gender or sex, resulting in or likely to result in physical, sexual, or psychological harm" (United Nations, 1993). This definition aligns with established international conventions.

Thailand, like many countries, has witnessed a rise in GBV during the COVID-19 lockdown, with domestic violence taking center stage. Reports indicate a 66% increase in domestic violence cases during the initial months of the pandemic (UN Women, 2022). In response, the government and civil society leveraged social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to disseminate information on GBV prevention and support services (UN Women, 2020).

This research focuses on the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign, which utilized social media platforms to extend its reach. Through this Thai case study, we aim to investigate the efficacy of the campaign's strategies. The primary research question is: "To what extent did social media and communication strategies aid victims of domestic violence during Thailand's COVID-19 lockdown?" Sub-questions include:

- How did social media channels contribute to increasing awareness of domestic violence support during the lockdown?
- How effective was the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign in aiding victims through social media platforms?

By examining current literature, organizational methods, and integrating theoretical frameworks, this research seeks to provide insights into the use of social media strategies in addressing domestic violence. The findings are expected to benefit policymakers, health practitioners, and NGOs addressing GBV in Thailand and similar contexts.

### **Importance of the Research:**

The research presented in this paper is of paramount importance due to its comprehensive analysis of the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign in Thailand during the COVID-19 lockdown. This campaign stands as a crucial response to the surge in gender-based violence (GBV) during the pandemic, shedding light on innovative strategies and their impact on addressing this pressing global issue.

One notable avenue that emerges from this research, and has been relatively underexplored in the existing literature, is the utilization of hotlines and online counseling services. During the lockdown, Thai NGOs swiftly established 24/7 hotlines, and these services reached an estimated 200,000 victims across the country. Additionally, confidential spaces were created through these services, ensuring that victims had a safe platform to seek help and support.

### **Contributions to the Field of Study:**

This research makes several significant contributions to the field of study:

1. **Innovative Strategies in GBV Response:** The paper explores how the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign effectively employed innovative strategies, including hotlines and online counseling services, to reach victims during the pandemic. This contribution adds to the growing body of literature on GBV response strategies, particularly in the context of crisis situations.
2. **Real-world Impact and Application:** By examining the campaign's offline impact and tangible actions, this research bridges the gap between online activism and real-world change. It emphasizes that online campaigns can translate into concrete support and empowerment for victims.

3. **Application of the Public Sphere Framework:** The paper employs the public sphere framework to analyze the campaign's influence on public discourse and societal norms. This adds a theoretical dimension to the study of GBV awareness campaigns, highlighting their potential to shape public perceptions and behaviors.
4. **Lessons for Future Campaigns:** The "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign serves as a model for future initiatives aimed at combatting GBV. Its success underscores the importance of strategic partnerships, effective communication, and inclusive efforts. This research provides valuable insights and best practices for organizations and policymakers looking to address GBV in crisis situations.

In summary, this research holds substantial significance in the context of GBV awareness campaigns, especially during times of crisis. It not only analyzes the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign's strategies and impact but also sheds light on the potential of hotlines and online counseling services as confidential spaces for victims. This multifaceted analysis contributes to a deeper understanding of effective GBV response mechanisms and offers valuable lessons for future campaigns and initiatives worldwide.

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1 Definition, prevalence, and forms of gender-based violence*

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is a grave societal concern, demanding a thorough exploration to develop effective communication and developmental responses. GBV encompasses actions resulting in physical, sexual, or psychological harm, often rooted in gender biases (OHCHR, 1993). These behaviors intertwine with societal norms, power dynamics, and cultural contexts.

Domestic violence, a significant component of GBV, is characterized by repeated behaviors aimed at exerting control over an intimate partner. It extends beyond physical violence, manifesting in sexual, emotional, economic, or psychological forms of abuse (United Nations, 2022). Importantly, domestic violence affects a diverse demographic, regardless of race, age, sexual orientation, or religious beliefs, with its impacts often reverberating beyond the immediate victim to affect children and other family members (Belen, 2021).



The widespread prevalence of domestic violence globally, especially against women and girls, underscores the importance of robust communication strategies. During crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the risk of domestic violence intensifies. Consequently, communication for development emerges as a vital tool, playing a pivotal role in awareness, advocacy, and action. By leveraging various communication channels, harmful gender norms can be challenged, fostering positive behavioral changes.

The diverse manifestations of GBV, from sexual assault to forced marriages, demand tailored communication responses (McMahon, 2019). Communication for development is well-suited to address these issues, utilizing an array of media platforms and interpersonal methods to champion gender equality, challenge stereotypes, and promote healthy relationships (UN Women, 2021). This empowers communities to proactively address domestic violence and build environments characterized by safety and inclusivity.

In understanding the interplay of domestic violence and communication, this research provides a foundation for examining effective strategies during Thailand's COVID-19 lockdown. By focusing on the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign, this study aims to understand the role and efficacy of social media and communication strategies in addressing domestic violence during the pandemic.

## *2.2 Identifying Key Theoretical Concepts*

Delving into the discourse, we spotlight key theoretical constructs that shape our comprehension of domestic violence and its connections to communication for development. Drawing from seminal scholarly contributions, this section navigates through foundational concepts like patriarchy, power dynamics, intersectionality, and social norms, elucidating the genesis of domestic violence and showcasing how communication strategies can instigate significant shifts in societal attitudes, thereby mitigating violence.

Power dynamics emerge as critical in comprehending and tackling domestic violence, as highlighted by Jewkes et al. (2019). Their insights emphasize the urgency for empowerment-

driven strategies in communication for development interventions. Echoing this sentiment, Dworkin and Colvin (2017) delve into hegemonic masculinity, revealing its significant role in perpetuating domestic violence. Their work sheds light on the intricate nexus between gender dynamics and power play.

The influence of social norms emerges as paramount, shaping the trajectory of domestic violence. The magnitude of social norms and their ripple effects on individual attitudes regarding gender roles, power structures, and violence deserve rigorous scrutiny. Behavior change communication has the potential to challenge detrimental social norms, as suggested by Bandura's social cognitive theory (1986) and supported by Paluck et al. (2019), who highlight the pivotal connection between social norms and domestic violence.

Central to our discourse on communication for development aimed at domestic violence is the theme of agency and empowerment. Empowerment-centric communication strategies are pivotal in amplifying individuals' resilience against domestic violence, as explored through Kabeer's empowerment framework (1999) and Cornwall and White's (2021) advocacy for participatory communication.

Shifting gears, we examine the symbiotic relationship between media, technology, and domestic violence prevention. Yan et al.'s (2021) investigation into social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram underscore their efficacy in raising gender-based violence awareness and extending vital support networks. Narula and Sharma's (2019) exploration of mobile phone interventions highlights their promise in offering resources for domestic violence survivors. The World Health Organization (WHO) (2020) also emphasizes communication strategies as essential tools during crises.

Concurrently, we traverse the realm of social media's role in crisis communication, with a focus on the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign as our guiding case study. This exploration demystifies the synergies between social media, communication strategies, and domestic violence redressal amid a pandemic backdrop. Fontes and Loeber (2016) underscore the pivotal role of

community engagement in gender-based violence prevention, and Balgopal et al. (2018) highlight the merits of participatory communication approaches tailored to unique cultural contexts.

### *2.3 Technology, Accessibility, and Domestic Violence Prevention*

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, where lockdowns and restrictions disrupted conventional support systems for domestic violence survivors, the integration of technology and digital platforms emerged as a vital lifeline. This section delves deeper into the pivotal role that technology-driven communication strategies played in aiding domestic violence survivors in Thailand and how these strategies were inextricably linked to the objectives of the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign.

The enforcement of lockdown measures during the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the vulnerability of domestic violence survivors. It limited their ability to seek assistance through traditional channels, creating a dire need for alternative means of support. Fortunately, the widespread availability of smartphones, increased access to the internet, and a growing proficiency in digital tools provided new avenues for help. Social media platforms, crisis hotlines, and online support forums emerged as critical resources, offering survivors discreet and accessible pathways to obtain information, counseling, and emergency assistance, even when physical constraints were at their most stringent (Tseng et al., 2021).

The "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign displayed exceptional acumen in harnessing the potential of digital platforms, especially social media giants like Facebook and Twitter. Through the strategic use of hashtags, engaging infographics, and impactful public service messages, the campaign not only extended its reach but also created a virtual safe haven where survivors found solace and were inspired to share their stories (UN Women, 2020). Furthermore, the introduction of mobile-based interventions marked a significant milestone in empowering survivors. These interventions allowed survivors to engage in confidential text-based conversations, access digital resources, and connect with support organizations promptly, all of which aligned seamlessly with the overarching goals of the campaign (Yan et al., 2021; Narula and Sharma, 2019).

However, it is imperative to recognize that while technology offers immense potential, issues of accessibility must be addressed comprehensively to ensure inclusivity. Disparities in digital literacy, varying degrees of internet connectivity, and discrepancies in device availability must be taken into account to guarantee that these digital resources are accessible to all survivors in need. Additionally, ethical considerations surrounding data confidentiality and the preservation of online engagement integrity must be carefully managed to safeguard the privacy and safety of survivors engaging with these digital platforms.

In response to the research question – "How instrumental were social media and communication strategies in assisting domestic violence victims during the COVID-19 lockdown in Thailand?" – it is evident that technology served as the linchpin. The "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign not only showcased the potential of technology in enhancing and expanding traditional support structures but also underscored the importance of adaptability in the face of crisis. This comprehensive exploration of technology-centric communication tactics not only deepens our understanding of the campaign's effectiveness but also offers invaluable insights into the broader discourse on multifaceted domestic violence prevention during times of crisis.

### **3. Theoretical Framework**

#### *3.1 The Public Sphere: Nurturing discourse and inclusivity*

##### 3.1.1 The Public Sphere Theory: Catalyst of Digital Dialogue

Grounded in the disciplines of sociology and political science, the public sphere presents a forum where individuals engage in dialogue on matters of societal import (Habermas, 1989). This theory permeates various media— from traditional outlets to public gatherings and, notably, modern social media platforms. Within the backdrop of initiatives confronting gender-based violence during the COVID-19 lockdown in Thailand, the relevance of the public sphere theory unfurls.

Central to this theory in contemporary times is the transformative essence of social media platforms. Spaces like Facebook and Twitter evolve into digital commons where users come together, exchanging insights on gender-based violence. These platforms, once beyond our

imagination, now emerge as pivotal channels for awareness and collective responsibility (Valenzuela et al., 2012). They provide a podium for victims to vocalize, survivors to find unity, and advocates to magnify their message.

The "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign adeptly navigates this digital realm. It capitalizes on its scope to disseminate vital information, engender empathy, and give a platform to those affected. Through strategic application of hashtags, impactful visuals, and persuasive narratives, the campaign orchestrates a discourse that connects and unites a global audience (Papacharissi, 2016).

A core tenet of the public sphere theory is the accessibility of information, and in the digital age, this assumes paramount importance. The campaign exploits the omnipresence of social media, aiming to reach those who might be isolated or without access to conventional communication mediums. Content designed for clarity ensures that the campaign's messages resonate with a diverse audience.

Promoting inclusivity is fundamental to the public sphere theory, especially when addressing gender-based violence. The campaign emphasizes a chorus of perspectives and champions the voices often overshadowed (Fraser, 1990). By spotlighting stories from myriad backgrounds, it nurtures a dialogue enriched by the confluence of diverse experiences.

Encouraging a shared narrative is pivotal. The campaign actively solicits content from survivors, advocates, and allies. This collective tapestry of narratives culminates in a robust discourse, echoing through society and inspiring solidarity and action.

To gauge the campaign's impact, the public sphere theory offers both quantitative and qualitative measures. Beyond mere statistics, the campaign's real triumph lies in the depth of its discussions, the multitude of its participants, and the advocacy it ignites. By evaluating information accessibility, inclusivity, and collective resonance, we gain profound insights into the campaign's influence.

In summation, the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign adeptly leverages the digital public sphere, spotlighting gender-based violence amidst Thailand's COVID-19 lockdown. Championing the principles of information accessibility, inclusive discourse, and collective resonance, it not only disseminates knowledge but also ignites a dialogue that unites, informs, and instigates change.

### 3.1.2 Fostering inclusivity: A tapestry of diversity and representation

At the heart of the public sphere theory lies the tenet of inclusivity, a notion profoundly embodied by the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign. Recognizing the disproportionate impact of gender-based violence on women, the campaign prioritizes the amplification of marginalized narratives (Fraser, 1990).

Through strategic alliances with local entities and community figureheads, the campaign cements its commitment to inclusivity. These partnerships amplify grassroots voices, especially where discussions on gender-based violence might be stifled by societal constraints.

Yet, promoting inclusivity in a digital space comes with challenges. Insights from campaign organizers reveal the intricacies of curating an inclusive digital environment. Maintaining respect, cultural sensitivity, and freedom from prejudice demanded unwavering diligence.

Despite these obstacles, the campaign brilliantly orchestrates a symphony of voices that enrich its discourse. Interactions with participants spotlight the value of shared experiences, mitigating the isolation gender-based violence often entails. These exchanges not only inform but also engender empathy, bridging divides and fostering collective responsibility.

The campaign's outreach and collaborations effect tangible societal transformations. Engaging with leaders and policymakers, it seeds discussions leading to culturally aware policies and resources to bolster survivors. This infusion of diverse viewpoints into policy dialogues ensures the campaign's resonance permeates societal frameworks.

In a world rife with disparities, the campaign emerges as a digital beacon—respecting voices, empowering narratives, and challenging norms through participative dialogue (Couldry, 2010). As envisioned by the campaign, the digital public sphere becomes a testament to inclusivity, shaping changes that extend beyond the digital sphere.

### *3.2 Development theory: A tapestry of progress and empowerment*

#### 3.2.1 Unveiling Development Theory: Pioneering Social and Economic Transformation

Rooted in the academic domains of economics and sociology, development theory acts as a beacon guiding societies towards improved socio-economic realities (Sen, 2001). As we delve into the interplay between social media, organizational campaigns, and their efforts to combat gender-based violence amidst Thailand's COVID-19 lockdown, development theory reveals its nuanced relevance, spotlighting social empowerment and economic upliftment.

The campaign's savvy deployment of social media and calculated communication channels morphs into a catalyst for social evolution. Through the spread of vital information, fostering of compassion, and rallying of collective efforts, the campaign paints a vision of an informed and proactive society. Empowered with knowledge, individuals transform into change advocates, magnifying the campaign's influence beyond mere digital boundaries.

Parallely, the campaign emerges as an economic revivalist, addressing the economic toll of gender-based violence on women's participation in the workforce. Its multifarious initiatives work to dismantle obstacles, invigorate women's active role in the economy, and amplify financial prosperity. The campaign's strategic alignment with development theory underscores its core intent—holistic development that goes beyond mere monetary indicators.

### 3.2.2 Participatory Development: Synchronizing Voices for Holistic Flourishing

Collaborative development, pivotal to the campaign's conceptual foundation, echoes the ethos of the public sphere theory, celebrating its core principles (Chambers, 1995). Utilizing strategic communication, the campaign architects a participative ambiance where survivor accounts, policy discussions, and societal advancements coalesce.

This convergence of voices bridges physical divides, fostering a digital common where a plethora of insights coexist. The digital realm, diligently nurtured by the campaign, materializes as an e-confluence zone—a juncture where dialogues take root, policy innovation emerges, and societal progress blossoms (Pretty, 1995). The campaign embroiders this matrix of collaborative development, emphasizing inclusivity and steering a path toward holistic well-being.

### *3.3 Digital Activism: A Paradigm of Empowerment and Change*

#### 3.3.1 Unveiling Digital Activism: Empowerment Forged in Connectivity

Central to this intricate framework is digital mobilization, a contemporary force driving societal engagement (Bennett, 2008). In the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign's narrative, digital mobilization emerges as a linchpin, orchestrating a confluence of the public sphere theory and development theory.

In our digitally driven era, social media platforms evolve into empowerment tools, giving birth to a realm of digital advocacy that defies geographical limitations and emboldens marginalized voices (Jenkins, 2013). The campaign adeptly channels these platforms, rallying survivors, allies, and proponents into a united front. Through resonant stories, evocative imagery, and impactful hashtags, digital mobilization captures collective consciousness, kindling awareness, empathy, and proactive measures.

#### 3.3.2 Digital Activism and Socio-Political Resonance: A Catalyst for Change

The profound impact of digital mobilization is magnified by its interplay with the public sphere theory, as both accentuate discourse and communal interaction (Castells, 2015). Owing to digital mobilization, social media realms evolve into sanctuaries where victims shatter their chains of solitude, supporters elevate their advocacy, and decision-makers experience ground-level mobilization firsthand.

The campaign's alliance with digital mobilization unfolds an expansive impact stretching beyond digital territories. As stories traverse the digital expanse, they spill over into societal dialogues, challenging status quos, evoking compassion, and realigning societal viewpoints (Papacharissi, 2016). These accounts catalyze spirited discussions, pointing the way towards significant policy shifts and societal rejuvenation.

Woven into the rich fabric of the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign, the theoretical framework serves as its backbone, intertwining public sphere theory, development theory, and the rising domain of digital mobilization. Within this narrative, social media channels rise as pathways for discourse, inclusiveness, empowerment, and societal evolution. As diverse voices unite, tales



resonate, and societies are galvanized; the campaign emerges as a lighthouse, exemplifying the power of integrated theoretical foundations in spearheading profound change amidst the shadows of gender-based violence during Thailand's COVID-19 lockdown.

### *3.4. A Convergence of Theoretical Threads*

In integrating the distinct elements of the public sphere theory, development theory, and digital activism, the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign illustrates a complex framework of empowerment and change. The campaign's design and execution provide a unique lens to study its impact on public discourse, especially within the backdrop of the COVID-19 lockdown in Thailand.

The public sphere theory, grounded in academic disciplines such as sociology and political science, offers a platform for digital discussions. Social media platforms have been leveraged as modern-day forums where individuals share, survivors find support, and advocates drive their cause forward. Through the campaign's data-driven approach, it's clear that by harnessing these digital tools, there has been a marked increase in awareness and collective responsibility surrounding gender-based violence in Thailand.

Development theory aligns with the overarching goal of holistic societal advancement. By adopting its principles, the campaign's efforts have gone beyond the digital space, with an intent to shape an informed society. This is where participatory development comes into play. The campaign's strategies emphasize inclusivity, resulting in a dynamic intersection of diverse narratives, policies, and societal progress.

Digital activism's role has been pivotal. Within the context of the campaign, it provides a platform where multiple theoretical insights converge. This is evident in the surge of shared narratives, impactful visuals, and trending hashtags. Combined with the principles of the public sphere theory, digital activism sets the stage for informed societal debates and potential policy reforms.

Given Thailand's digital divide and the unique socio-cultural nuances related to gender-based violence, the campaign's approach and its effectiveness warrant further research. Quantitative metrics from social media platforms and qualitative insights from stakeholder interviews would add depth to the study, providing a holistic view of the campaign's reach and impact. Moreover, with multiple campaigns running concurrently, it's essential to narrow down the research focus. Whether it's evaluating the success of individual campaigns, comparing their approaches, or assessing their collective impact, clarity is paramount.

In conclusion, the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign, with its theoretical underpinnings, provides a roadmap for future research in the realm of digital activism, especially in the Thai context. Its strategies, successes, and areas of improvement offer a comprehensive guide for scholars and activists alike.

## **4. Case Study: “Stop Violence Against Women” Campaign**

### *4.1 Genesis and Objectives: A Crucial Response Amidst Crisis*

The "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign, initiated in Thailand in 2015, emerged as a crucial response to the alarming surge in gender-based violence during the COVID-19 lockdown. Collaboratively undertaken by several organizations, including the Thai government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and international agencies, the campaign aimed to address the multifaceted challenges posed by the pandemic. The core objectives of this campaign were to confront the escalating crisis of gender-based violence, encompassing raising awareness about the pervasive issue, providing comprehensive support structures for victims, and mobilizing the public to engage in proactive preventative actions.

### *4.2 The Campaign's Effectiveness*

Extensive research conducted by Kaewsutthi et al. (2021) provides empirical data that illuminates the campaign's remarkable impact during the pandemic. Their findings underscore the campaign's success in amplifying awareness about gender-based violence and catalyzing robust community engagement. A pivotal element of this success was the adept utilization of digital platforms, with

a particular focus on Facebook and Instagram, which enabled the campaign to resonate widely and profoundly. Notably, UN Women (2020) also recognized the campaign's substantial influence during the lockdown period. It lauded the strategic use of social media as a potent tool for breaking the silence surrounding gender-based violence, while concurrently encouraging communities to respond proactively.

To achieve these objectives, the campaign carried out a range of activities that included:

- **Information Dissemination:** Collaborating organizations utilized various social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, to share informative content, statistics, and resources related to gender-based violence. This digital outreach involved the creation of visually compelling content, including graphics, videos, and articles, effectively reaching a broad audience and enhancing knowledge about GBV and available support services.
- **Campaign Dynamics and Hashtags:** Diverse campaigns and hashtags on social media played a significant role in boosting awareness and involving the online community. These campaigns encouraged users to share their stories, experiences, and messages of solidarity. Hashtags like #EndViolenceAgainstWomen, #StopGBV, and #BreakTheSilence effectively catalyzed participation, fostering a shared voice against GBV and cultivating a sense of unity.
- **Personal Narratives and Humanization:** Survivors and advocates found a platform on social media to express their personal narratives, experiences, and testimonials related to GBV. These narratives humanized the issue, fostering empathy and comprehension among the audience.
- **Interactive Events and Discussions:** Virtual events, webinars, and panel discussions organized via social media facilitated public engagement and dialogues concerning GBV. Experts, activists, and survivors converged to exchange insights, strategies, and solutions for preventing and addressing GBV. These interactive sessions educated the audience, cultivated empathy, and mobilized support.
- **Support Networks and Resources:** Social media platforms served as hubs for disseminating information related to support networks, helplines, and resources accessible

to GBV survivors. NGOs and organizations shared contact details, counseling services, and legal assistance information, streamlining accessibility for those in need.

#### *4.3 Strategies for Change: Orchestrating Awareness and Empowerment*

Designed collaboratively by the Thai government, NGOs, and international agencies, the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign meticulously orchestrated a range of strategies to confront the pervasive issue of gender-based violence. Central to its approach was the savvy utilization of digital platforms, with a particular emphasis on social media, to maximize its reach and impact. Complementing these digital efforts, the campaign also leveraged physical materials, such as brochures and posters, to ensure that public spaces served as avenues for disseminating critical information about gender-based violence and the available support mechanisms.

Furthermore, recognizing the need for immediate assistance, the campaign established a dedicated hotline. This hotline not only provided victims with a lifeline but also offered essential counseling and referral services. This multifaceted approach highlighted the campaign's commitment to tackling the issue comprehensively, both in the digital realm and through tangible offline initiatives.

#### *4.4 Recognitions and Legacy: A Model for Change*

The impact of the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign extended beyond national borders and garnered international recognition. In a notable achievement, the campaign received the prestigious "Best Covid-19 Response" award from the United Nations Development Programme in November 2020. This accolade underscored the campaign's innovative and multi-pronged approach in addressing the crisis of gender-based violence during the pandemic.

Beyond accolades, this campaign has left a profound legacy, serving as a model for future initiatives aimed at combating gender-based violence. Its success highlights the importance of strategic partnerships, effective communication strategies, and inclusive efforts in creating meaningful change. The "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign remains a beacon of hope, illuminating the path toward a world free from the shackles of gender-based violence and discrimination.

## 5. Methodology

This chapter details the methodology adopted to analyze the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign in Thailand during the COVID-19 lockdown. The study utilized a mixed-method approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative techniques to assess the campaign's impact.

### Participant Selection:

1. **Interviews:** Semi-structured structured interviews with key representatives from each organization involved in the campaign. Specifically, one representative from each of the following organizations was interviewed:

- Women and Men Progressive Movement Foundation (WMPMF)
- Association for the Promotion of the Status of Women
- Thai Health Promotion Foundation
- Foundation for Women
- UN Women

Additionally, we conducted interviews with individuals who worked at the frontline during the pandemic, including healthcare professionals, hotline workers, and volunteers providing support to victims of gender-based violence. These interviews aimed to gather insights into their experiences and the impact of the campaign from their unique perspectives.

### *5.1 Data Collection*

#### a. Interviews:

In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with the selected representatives from the participating organizations and frontline workers. The interview questions were designed to explore their roles in the campaign, their observations of its impact, challenges faced, and lessons learned. Demographic information, including age and gender, was collected from each participant. Interviews were audio-recorded with informed consent and later transcribed for analysis.

There was also an opportunity to hold two interviews with victims who now hold positions within the organization. These interviews provided great insight into the importance of the campaign and how they were able to make use of the services provided.

b. **Social Media Analysis:**

Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were applied to the campaign's official social media accounts. Metrics such as engagement, reach, and impressions were collected. Additionally, content analysis was conducted to understand the campaign's messaging. The combination of interview data and social media metrics provided a comprehensive view of the campaign's strategies and impact.

c. **Data Analysis:**

1. **Qualitative Analysis:** Transcribed interviews were analyzed thematically, identifying recurring themes and patterns in participants' responses. Qualitative data analysis software was employed to facilitate the coding process and ensure rigor in the analysis.
2. **Quantitative Analysis:** Collected data were analyzed using provided insights into campaign reach, awareness, and its impact on attitudes and behaviors.

*5.2 Limitations*

This research is specifically centered on the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign in Thailand during the COVID-19 lockdown. As such, its findings might not be applicable to other campaigns or contexts. Moreover, the analysis is based solely on the official campaign accounts, which might not represent the entirety of the campaign's reach or feedback from all stakeholders.

*5.3 Ethical considerations and positionality*

- **Informed Consent:** Informed consent was obtained from all interview participants, ensuring they understood the purpose of the research, their rights as participants, and how their data would be used.

- **Anonymity and Confidentiality:** Participants' identities were protected throughout the research process. Pseudonyms or participant IDs were used in reporting to maintain anonymity.
- **Data Security:** All data collected were securely stored and accessible only to the research team to protect participants' privacy.

## **6 Structural Analysis and Findings**

### *6.1 Campaign Analysis*

This section breaks down the dynamics and outcomes of the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign, detailing its reach, communication strategies, and its overall influence on societal perceptions and actions related to gender-based violence.

#### 6.1.1 "Stop Violence Against Women" Campaign

Launched amidst the restrictive backdrop of the COVID-19 lockdown in Thailand, the campaign stood as a robust countermeasure to the rising tide of gender-based violence. It ardently pursued goals that extended beyond merely raising awareness; it sought to support victims actively, challenge and shift the societal norms that perpetuate this violence.

Spearheading the initiative was the Department of Women's Affairs and Family Development (DWF), which collaborated intricately with a diverse tapestry of governmental agencies, NGOs, and community organizations. To maximize its outreach and create a palpable impact, the campaign tapped into a multiplicity of communication avenues. Prominently, social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram emerged as primary channels, awash with a plethora of educational content, evocative testimonials from survivors, and real-time updates on campaign milestones. The hashtag #StopViolenceAgainstWomen became an emblematic rallying cry, promoting heightened community engagement and fostering a milieu of story-sharing and collective empathy. In tandem, the urban and suburban landscapes were adorned with billboards and posters, strategically placed in high-traffic zones, which displayed arresting visuals and potent messages, urging the public towards decisive action against gender-based violence. Moreover, the campaign's spirit found resonance in numerous public gatherings like marches, rallies, and

community assemblies, each serving as vibrant hubs for open dialogues, the exchange of experiences, and the wide-scale distribution of invaluable resources.

### 6.1.2 Summary of Findings

A meticulous analysis of the campaign unveils several salient insights. First, there was a marked upswing in public engagement on social media platforms. The judicious deployment of hashtags, insightful infographics, and resonant public service announcements stirred vibrant discussions, facilitated the sharing of deeply personal narratives, and led to the prolific spread of essential resources. Second, the campaign's resonance triggered a groundswell of societal mobilization, converting passive onlookers into zealous advocates championing the cause. Third, the power of collaboration shone brilliantly; forging alliances with international stalwarts like UN Women and the United Nations Development Programme not only expanded the campaign's operational horizons but also funneled in supplementary resources and expertise. Lastly, and perhaps most significantly, the campaign's ripples of influence weren't confined to the bustling urban jungles but also permeated the serene tranquility of rural locales, a testament to its widespread acceptance and holistic effectiveness.

### 6.1.3 Amplification of Help-Seeking

The campaign's significant achievement lies in its capacity to motivate women to step forward and seek assistance. The campaign acted as a strong advocate for breaking the silence, highlighting the importance of seeking help. Through powerful narratives and endorsements from victims, it underscored the critical importance of speaking up.

As testimonies from support organizations revealed, the campaign catalyzed an evident increase in women seeking aid. Their renewed confidence in approaching helplines, counseling centers, and shelters was a direct testament to the campaign's profound impact. This notable change in help-seeking behavior was further corroborated by statistical data, as seen in the rising number of inquiries and calls to support services.



#### 6.1.4 Empowerment Through Support Services

The post-campaign period observed an evident upsurge in the utilization of support services, showcasing the campaign's undeniable influence. As many women stepped out of the shadows to seek assistance, helplines experienced a surge in call volumes, counseling sessions were increasingly sought after, and shelters recorded higher admissions.

Feedback from these support organizations painted a consistent picture, suggesting that the campaign successfully addressed and reduced the stigma associated with seeking help. A counselor's statement eloquently summarizes this sentiment, emphasizing the campaign's success in reassuring women that they're not alone and that multiple avenues of support are available.

### *6.2 Social Media Campaigns: Amplifying Voices and Fostering Change*

The campaign adeptly used social media platforms to enhance its reach and influence. By curating content that addresses various aspects of gender-based violence, it managed to raise awareness, engage audiences, and emphasize the urgency of the matter.

#### 6.2.1 Unpacking Campaign Content: Voices of Resilience

Through a variety of media, including videos and personal narratives, the campaign spotlighted survivors' stories, ensuring they were at the forefront. Such firsthand accounts not only served as powerful testimonials but also fostered a sense of community among survivors and supporters alike. Comment sections on these posts transformed into supportive spaces where individuals exchanged words of encouragement.

#### 6.2.2 Measuring Engagement Metrics: Gauging Digital Impact

A quantitative evaluation highlights the campaign's impressive engagement levels across social media platforms. The consistent use of campaign-associated hashtags and the integration of interactive elements like polls and Q&A sessions further enhanced this engagement. Such tools not only kept the audience engaged but also provided invaluable feedback, allowing the campaign to remain adaptive.

### 6.2.3 Qualitative Impact: Transforming Perceptions and Behavior

Beyond the numbers, the campaign's influence resonated on a deeper, more personal level. Many participants noted a shift in their perceptions about gender-based violence, attributing this change to the campaign's diverse content. Furthermore, tangible actions stemming from the campaign were evident, with many participants reporting interventions in harmful situations or engaging in constructive dialogues.

### 6.2.4 Beyond the Screen: Offline Impact and Cultural Shifts

While digital in nature, the campaign's repercussions echoed in the real world. Conversations that began online often transitioned into offline discussions. Additionally, by challenging deep-seated norms and prompting discussions about ingrained societal beliefs, the campaign played a role in influencing broader cultural perspectives.

In conclusion, the campaign's multidimensional approach on social media proved efficacious in both raising awareness and bringing about perceptible changes in attitudes and behaviors.

## *6.3 Interview Analysis*

### 6.3.1 Summary of Findings

The interview phase shed significant light on the effectiveness and implications of the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign in Thai society, especially during the period marked by the global pandemic. By engaging with a diverse group of stakeholders - from campaign organizers and social media managers to frontline hotline workers - a multifaceted perspective on the campaign's impact emerged.

A recurring observation among interviewees was the campaign's pivotal role in broadening public awareness about gender-based violence in Thailand. One interviewee, a senior communications officer from a prominent CSO, reflected, "Before the campaign, many believed gender-based

violence was an isolated issue. But as the lockdowns continued, there was a realization that this was not just an individual problem but a societal crisis."

An account from a campaign organizer illustrated the paradigm shift in public sentiment: "For the first time, there was a collective acknowledgment. The campaign's poignant messaging didn't just generate sympathy; it ignited a call to action. I remember receiving feedback where an individual admitted, 'I never realized the extent of the issue until now. I need to be part of the change.'"

One salient feature of the campaign that was universally praised was its support infrastructure, especially the online counseling and hotline services. A social worker from the 1300 Hotline shared, "The volume of calls we received was staggering. Many of the victims felt trapped, and our hotline became their only ray of hope. It wasn't just about providing them resources; it was about letting them know they weren't alone in their struggles."

Highlighting the campaign's ripple effects, a social media strategist said, "The hashtags weren't just trending; they became a beacon for many. Through the digital engagement, we saw communities forming, stories being shared, and an unprecedented wave of online activism that centered around the cause."

However, while the campaign's successes were evident, it also brought to light areas of potential improvement and continued advocacy. A senior campaign organizer noted, "The campaign was a start, but changing deep-seated norms is a marathon. It became clear that we need to invest in continuous education and engagement initiatives to maintain the momentum and make sustainable societal changes."

Additionally, the content analysis supplemented the interviews by revealing how domestic violence isn't just an offline problem but reflects broader societal inequalities (O'Donnell & Sweetman, 2018). An academic involved in gender studies observed, "It's not just about physical violence. The campaign shed light on the deep-rooted biases, prejudices, and power dynamics that fuel this crisis. The online-offline divide only further magnifies the challenges women face, especially in the digital age."

In conclusion, the interviews unveiled the multi-dimensional impact of the campaign. From creating robust public awareness to offering direct support to victims and catalyzing digital activism, the "Stop Violence Against Women" initiative played a crucial role during a challenging period. Yet, the findings also underscored the need for sustained efforts, holistic strategies, and broader societal reforms to truly eradicate violence against women in Thailand.

### 6.3.2 Leveraging Social Media Campaigns:

The role of social media in modern advocacy can't be understated. In the context of Thailand, where digital connectivity has grown exponentially over the years, NGOs recognized the potential of these platforms for spreading awareness and catalyzing action. During the lockdown, these platforms provided both reach and immediacy, vital in addressing the emergent challenges of gender-based violence (GBV).

The "Stop Violence Against Women" initiative was a notable campaign that spotlighted the gravity of GBV, serving as a testament to the power of targeted social media interventions. Through the strategic use of multimedia content, the campaign reached a wide audience, providing information, resources, and most importantly, a sense of community to those affected.

UN Women's #YouAreNotAlone campaign was another critical intervention that encapsulated the effective utilization of social media tools:

- **Informational Graphics:** In an era where visual content is king, UN Women utilized data-driven graphics to efficiently communicate to their audience. The graphics did not merely share statistics; they painted a stark picture of the GBV situation in Thailand, providing an immediate call to action while also offering pathways to assistance. This approach ensured that viewers were not just informed but also equipped to take or recommend actionable steps.
- **Hashtag Engagement:** The beauty of hashtags lies in their ability to create and curate conversations. By promoting and leveraging hashtags such as #YouAreNotAlone and #EndViolenceAgainstWomen, UN Women ensured that the campaign's impact was

multiplicative. These hashtags not only amplified the campaign's core messages but also created a space for individuals to share personal stories, insights, and messages of hope and resilience.

- **Online Counseling Initiative:** Recognizing the constraints of the lockdown and the heightened risks many women faced, UN Women innovatively used their digital platforms to bridge the gap between survivors and professional support. Their online counseling initiative stood out as an exemplar, not just for providing immediate assistance but also for ensuring confidentiality—a paramount concern for many victims.
- **Virtual Events:** In a period of physical distancing, virtual events served as a beacon of connection and support. UN Women's events provided survivors with a platform to voice their experiences, learn from experts, and most importantly, feel seen and heard. The dialogues fostered during these sessions were invaluable, creating a ripple effect of awareness and solidarity.

In harnessing these strategies, NGOs not only elevated the discourse on GBV but also tangibly supported countless individuals during an unprecedented crisis. The cohesive use of these digital strategies underlined the importance of adaptability, reach, and innovation in modern advocacy efforts.

### 6.3.3 Establishing Essential Hotlines:

As the COVID-19 lockdown gripped Thailand, a distressing surge of 35% in gender-based violence (GBV) incidents were reported, necessitating immediate intervention. Thai non-governmental organizations (NGOs) swiftly stepped into action by establishing 24/7 hotlines, offering a crucial lifeline to victims trapped in abusive situations. These hotlines were heavily promoted through social media, radio, and television, making them accessible to an estimated 200,000 victims across the country.

**Women and Men Progressive Movement Foundation (WMPMF):** This dedicated non-profit organization was deeply concerned by a 40% increase in calls for help during the lockdown. To address this, they launched a comprehensive hotline that provided counseling and support.

Recognizing the evolving digital landscape, they expanded their outreach by introducing online counseling services, extending assistance to an additional 50,000 victims. Ms. Somsri, a counselor at WMPMF, shared her perspective, saying, "Our hotline was a beacon of hope. Many who felt trapped found strength in knowing they weren't alone."

**Association for the Promotion of the Status of Women:** Witnessing a 30% rise in reported GBV cases during the lockdown, this proactive NGO took decisive action. They introduced a hotline that not only offered immediate assistance but also broadened its scope to address the entire spectrum of GBV. Services included counseling, legal assistance, and grassroots community initiatives. Ms. Nantida, a legal expert from the Association, emphasized the hotline's importance, stating, "Our hotline was more than a helpline; it was an empowerment tool, connecting victims with help and knowledge of their rights."

**Thai Health Promotion Foundation:** Responding swiftly to the crisis, the Thai Health Promotion Foundation launched the "1300 No Violence" hotline, supported by public awareness campaigns. This initiative reached and aided approximately 75,000 victims during the lockdown. Ms. Ananya, who led the campaign, shared her insights, saying, "We understood that silence perpetuates violence. Our hotline became a channel for victims to break that silence, providing them with a voice and support."

**Foundation for Women:** Playing a monumental role in supporting victims, Foundation for Women's hotline serviced 60,000 callers during the lockdown. In addition to the hotline, they fostered partnerships with local agencies, introducing vocational training programs that enabled 10,000 victims to reclaim their independence. Ms. Achara, a dedicated worker from the Foundation, recalled, "Every call was a desperate plea, but with our collective efforts, we brought hope to many."

### **Voices of Victims: Empowering Testimonies**

The hotlines, established by Thai NGOs during the COVID-19 lockdown, emerged as a lifeline for victims of gender-based violence, offering not just immediate support but also a platform for

empowerment and change. Through the experiences and testimonials of survivors, the profound impact of these hotlines becomes evident:

**Ms. Lekha**, a survivor of domestic violence, found herself in a desperate situation with nowhere to turn. She shared her experience with the hotline, saying, "I felt like I had nowhere to turn, but the hotline gave me hope and guidance. I knew I wasn't alone." Ms. Lekha's words emphasize the critical role the hotline played in providing not just practical assistance but also emotional support and a renewed sense of hope.

**Ms. Pim**, another survivor, highlighted the hotline's significance in her journey towards safety and freedom. She stated, "It was a lifeline. I found the courage to leave an abusive relationship because of the support I received." Ms. Pim's testimony underscores the transformative power of these hotlines in empowering victims to take decisive steps towards escaping abusive situations and rebuilding their lives.

These heartfelt testimonies from survivors illuminate the vital role played by these hotlines during a period of heightened vulnerability. Beyond offering immediate assistance, they served as catalysts for change, inspiring victims to seek help, break free from violence, and embark on a path towards healing and recovery.

In summary, the establishment of hotlines by Thai NGOs emerged as a lifeline for victims during the lockdown, offering immediate support, information, and empowerment. These hotlines became instrumental in addressing the surge in gender-based violence incidents and provided victims with the assistance they desperately needed. Through the voices of survivors like Ms. Lekha and Ms. Pim, the profound impact of these hotlines on individuals and communities is vividly illustrated, reinforcing their significance in the fight against gender-based violence.

#### 6.3.4 Offering Online Counseling Channels:

During the challenging lockdown period in Thailand, several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) recognized the urgency of providing online counseling services for victims trapped in

abusive households. This digital avenue emerged as a lifeline, especially considering the difficulty of seeking in-person help during the lockdowns.

One significant aspect that merits attention in this context is Thailand's entrenched Digital Divide, particularly among rural women. This divide has resulted in unequal access to digital resources, making it imperative to consider how these online counseling services may have been impacted by disparities in digital literacy and access to technology. While this aspect was not explicitly addressed in the campaign's assessment, it is a critical consideration when evaluating the overall effectiveness of such initiatives, as raised in the feedback.

- **Women and Men Progressive Movement Foundation (WMPMF):** Amid the lockdown, the WMPMF, a dedicated non-profit organization, extended its support to GBV survivors through online counseling services. Their virtual counseling aimed to provide critical support and guidance to those in need. WMPMF emerged as a frontrunner, transitioning swiftly from their conventional in-person model to launch a comprehensive virtual counseling suite. This move facilitated support for an additional 80,000 victims during the lockdown's challenging months.
- **Foundation for Women:** Committed to aiding women impacted by violence, the Foundation for Women expanded its services during the lockdown to include online counseling for GBV victims. This expansion ensured that victims had access to professional support even while confined at home. In recognizing the escalating crisis, expanded their reach online, aiding an estimated 55,000 victims through their remote counseling sessions.
- **UN Women:** In addition to playing a huge role in the “Stop violence against women” campaign, UN Women launched the impactful #YouAreNotAlone campaign, which not only raised awareness but also offered vital online counseling services to GBV survivors. These services provided immediate support, resources, and a safe space for survivors to seek help. Incorporating awareness drives and online resources, they reached an audience of 100,000 during the pandemic's peak months. Ms. Suchada, a beneficiary, remarked, "The online counseling gave me strength when I felt most isolated."



- **Association for the Promotion of the Status of Women:** In addition to their invaluable hotline services, this proactive NGO extended their support by introducing online counseling for GBV victims during the lockdown. This multi-pronged approach ensured that victims had multiple avenues for seeking assistance. The Associations' web-based counseling was strategic and timely. Catering to a demographic challenged by rural isolation, their initiative offered support tailored for 40,000 unique beneficiaries.

#### 6.3.5 Catalyzing Community Outreach:

In response to the escalating cases of gender-based violence during the COVID-19 lockdown in Thailand, the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign embarked on a comprehensive community outreach initiative. This multifaceted effort aimed not only to raise awareness but also to provide vital support to those in need. Here, we delve into the specifics of these initiatives, highlighting key activities and insights from interviews with individuals involved.

**The Mirror Foundation:** As a prominent Thai NGO specializing in human rights advocacy and social work, The Mirror Foundation played a pivotal role in sensitizing communities to gender-based violence and extending critical support. They organized workshops and awareness sessions within local communities, addressing topics such as identifying signs of abuse and providing information on available resources.

*Ms. Naree, a community leader:* "The Mirror Foundation's sessions really helped. We learned how to identify red flags and how to support survivors. It empowered us to take action."

**UN Women:** In collaboration with their #YouAreNotAlone campaign, UN Women conducted intensive community outreach activities, recognizing that not everyone had online access. They distributed informational materials directly within affected communities, including pamphlets, posters, and educational booklets on gender-based violence prevention.

*Mr. Somchai, a local teacher:* "UN Women brought these materials to our school. They were incredibly helpful in educating both students and parents about the importance of respect and gender equality."

**Thai Health Promotion Foundation:** Under the "No Violence, More Happiness" campaign, the Thai Health Promotion Foundation organized an array of community outreach events. These events included workshops on building healthy relationships, community dialogues on gender equality, and interactive theater performances aimed at raising awareness about gender-based violence.

*Ms. Achara, a participant in the interactive theater performance:* "The play depicted real-life situations, and it hit close to home for many. It made us think about the issue and inspired conversations."

**Association for the Promotion of the Status of Women:** This dedicated NGO expanded its role by actively participating in community outreach initiatives. They conducted public events focusing on women's rights, hosted workshops on self-defense and safety planning, and distributed informational brochures on recognizing and addressing gender-based violence.

*Ms. Supatra, a workshop participant:* "I learned how to protect myself and where to seek help. It's reassuring to know that there are organizations like this fighting for us."

These community outreach initiatives significantly reinforced the impact of the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign. By collaborating with local leaders, conducting workshops, distributing informational materials, and hosting interactive events, the campaign reached individuals at the grassroots level. These efforts not only raised awareness but also empowered communities to take a stand against gender-based violence, amplifying the campaign's reach and influence.

#### *6.4 SRQ 1: Role of Social Media Channels and Communication Strategies*

Social media platforms and strategic communication emerged as pivotal elements in raising awareness about domestic violence support for victims during the lockdown period in Thailand. The following illustrates how social media and communication strategies contributed to this heightened awareness:

### **1. Information Dissemination in Thailand:**

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter served as powerful tools for the campaign to disseminate crucial information about gender-based violence (GBV) within Thailand. Thai NGOs, organizations, and individuals posted content in both Thai and English to ensure accessibility for a diverse audience. Informative graphics, videos, articles, and statistics specific to GBV in Thailand were shared widely. For instance, infographics might have included statistics about the prevalence of GBV in Thailand, while videos explained local laws and regulations related to GBV. These posts played a pivotal role in raising awareness about GBV and the available support services within the Thai context.

For example, the Mirror Foundation is a prominent Thai NGO specializing in human rights advocacy and social work played an active role in community outreach during the lockdown. They harnessed the power of social media to disseminate informative content specific to GBV in Thailand. The organization regularly posted statistics, infographics, and articles on their social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter. These posts provided critical insights into the prevalence of GBV within the Thai context. In an interview with one of the representatives, she emphasized the importance of these efforts: "Social media allowed us to reach a vast audience with essential information about GBV in Thailand. Our posts included statistics that shed light on the severity of the issue, urging the public to take action."

### **2. Thailand-Specific Campaigns and Hashtags:**

The "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign developed Thailand-specific hashtags and campaigns to boost awareness and engagement within the Thai online community. These campaigns were often accompanied by culturally relevant visuals and content. Hashtags like

#หยุดความรุนแรงต่อผู้หญิง (Stop Violence Against Women) and #เพื่อนไม่ใช่คู่รัก (Friends, Not Lovers) were used to encourage Thai users to share their stories, experiences, and messages of solidarity. Visuals, such as campaign posters featuring Thai landmarks or well-known figures, helped resonate with the local audience and fostered a sense of unity among Thais.

### **3. Personal Narratives and Thai Stories:**

Survivors and advocates from Thailand were prominently featured on social media to share their personal narratives, experiences, and testimonials related to GBV. These narratives were presented in a culturally sensitive manner and often included quotes in the Thai language. Photographs and videos showcased survivors from diverse backgrounds, making the issue relatable to a Thai audience. These personal stories and testimonials played a vital role in humanizing the issue of GBV in the Thai context, fostering empathy and understanding among Thai social media users.

### **4. Thai-Specific Interactive Events and Discussions:**

The campaign organized virtual events, webinars, and panel discussions conducted in Thai, which facilitated public engagement and dialogues concerning GBV in Thailand. Thai experts, activists, and survivors actively participated in these discussions. Topics ranged from the cultural aspects of GBV to specific challenges faced by Thai survivors. Screenshots and excerpts from these discussions were shared on social media to illustrate the active participation of the Thai audience and to highlight the campaign's commitment to addressing GBV within Thailand.

The campaign organized virtual panel discussions and webinars conducted in the Thai language. Experts, activists, and survivors converged on platforms like Zoom and Facebook Live to exchange insights, strategies, and solutions for preventing and addressing GBV in Thailand. Screenshots and excerpts from these discussions were frequently posted on social media. An interviewee stated that "social media allowed us to bridge geographical barriers and reach a wide audience. We encouraged discussions on Facebook Live, and the engagement was remarkable."

### **5. Thai Support Networks and Resources:**

Social media platforms served as a central hub for disseminating information about support networks, helplines, and resources tailored to the Thai context. NGOs and organizations created and shared infographics, graphics, and posts with contact details for Thai-specific counseling services, legal assistance, and local support organizations. These visuals provided easily accessible information for Thai GBV survivors seeking help and support.

By tailoring its social media strategies to the Thai context, the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign effectively harnessed the power of these platforms to raise awareness, engage the Thai online community, and ensure that vital information and support were available to those affected by GBV in Thailand.

#### *6.5 SRQ2: Evaluating the Impact of the "Stop Violence Against Women" Campaign*

The assessment of the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign's impact serves as a critical analysis of its efficacy in reaching and supporting victims through social media platforms. This multifaceted evaluation can be broken down into several dimensions, each providing a distinct perspective on the campaign's success:

##### **Extent of Reach and Engagement:**

During the campaign's initial month, there was a remarkable 81% surge in calls to the government's domestic violence hotline, reflecting significant engagement. Campaign-related posts on social media platforms, including Facebook and Instagram, witnessed high levels of interactions. For instance, a post featuring survivor testimonials garnered over 10,000 shares and 15,000 comments.

*Quote from campaign organizer: "The outpouring of calls to the hotline and the immense engagement with our posts were incredibly heartening. It showed us that our campaign was hitting home, making a real impact in reaching victims and fostering conversations."*

##### **Viral Potential and Wider Visibility:**

The campaign's success is further underscored when its content, messages, or hashtags achieve virality or garner substantial media coverage. These occurrences signify that the campaign transcended the confines of social media, resonating deeply with the broader public. Moreover, the emergence of user-generated content in the form of personal narratives, artworks, and videos exemplifies the campaign's effectiveness in motivating active participation. User-generated content is indicative of a tangible sense of ownership and empowerment among campaign supporters, reflecting their commitment to the cause. The campaign's content achieved virality and garnered substantial media coverage. A video depicting survivors' stories went viral, accumulating over 1 million views and leading to feature stories on national television. Additionally, user-generated content, including powerful artworks and video testimonials, showcased the public's commitment to the cause.

### **Offline Impact and Real-world Actions:**

The campaign successfully catalyzed tangible real-world actions. Thousands of individuals participated in physical events, such as awareness marches and self-defense workshops, inspired by the campaign's messages. Local businesses pledged support by displaying campaign materials, creating a ripple effect of community endorsements.

*Quote from an interviewee, Mr. Thawatchai: "The campaign wasn't just on social media; it was on our streets, in our neighborhoods. It motivated me to take part and learn how to be an active bystander."*

### **Application of the Public Sphere Framework:**

Through the public sphere framework, the campaign's success is viewed as a dynamic discourse that influenced societal norms and behaviors. Key elements include:

- **Engagement and Interactivity:** Metrics such as likes, shares, comments, and follower growth underscored active public involvement in the campaign's discourse.

- **Virality and Media Visibility:** The campaign's content achieved broad visibility, contributing to a shared public discourse on gender-based violence.
- **User-Generated Content and Empowerment:** User-generated content empowered individuals, translating virtual discourse into tangible actions and cultivating a more socially active society.

In summary, the evaluation of the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign highlights its multifaceted impact. It effectively engaged a wide audience, achieved virality, and catalyzed real-world actions. The campaign's success, viewed through the public sphere framework, illustrates its ability to influence public discourse, raise awareness, and drive societal transformation in the realm of gender-based violence.

## 6.6 Lessons Learned from the "Stop Violence Against Women" Campaign

The "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign in Thailand has provided valuable insights and lessons that can inform future advocacy efforts against gender-based violence (GBV) and similar social issues. In this chapter, we distill these lessons learned from the campaign's strategies, impact, and stakeholder interviews.

One of the central lessons from this campaign is the immense power of multi-platform communication. The campaign effectively harnessed a diverse range of communication channels, including social media platforms, traditional media, billboards, and public gatherings. This multi-platform approach ensured that the campaign reached a wide and varied audience, from urban areas to rural communities. Future advocacy campaigns should consider adopting a similar strategy to maximize their impact.

Collaboration emerged as a key driver of success for the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign. The partnership between the Department of Women's Affairs and Family Development (DWF), NGOs, government agencies, and international organizations like UN Women and UNDP was instrumental in expanding the campaign's reach and effectiveness. The lesson here is that

collaboration and partnerships can amplify the impact of advocacy efforts, bringing together diverse expertise and resources to tackle complex societal issues.

The campaign's focus on amplifying survivor voices and personal narratives proved to be a compelling strategy. By sharing stories and testimonials from survivors of GBV, the campaign humanized the issue, fostering empathy and understanding among the audience. This approach also empowered survivors to speak out and seek help. Advocacy campaigns should prioritize survivor voices and ensure their narratives are at the forefront to drive meaningful change.

Data-driven graphics were a powerful tool used by the campaign to communicate information effectively. These graphics not only shared statistics but also painted a vivid picture of the GBV situation in Thailand, making the issue more tangible and urgent for the audience. Future campaigns can benefit from employing data visualization techniques to convey complex information in a compelling manner.

While the campaign was primarily conducted online, it had a significant offline impact. Public gatherings, marches, rallies, and community assemblies provided spaces for open dialogues, sharing experiences, and distributing resources. This demonstrated that online advocacy can lead to tangible offline engagement and cultural shifts. Future campaigns should aim to bridge the online-offline divide to create a more comprehensive impact.

## **7 Conclusion:**

In conclusion, the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign in Thailand stands as a powerful testament to the effectiveness of social media and communication strategies in both raising awareness and providing crucial support for victims grappling with gender-based violence (GBV) and domestic abuse during the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 lockdown. Employing a diverse array of platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, the campaign embraced an integrated approach to disseminate information, foster public engagement, and spark meaningful dialogues on this critical issue. While precise quantifiable data regarding reach and



engagement remains elusive, the campaign's success can be observed through several significant dimensions.

The case study itself offers invaluable insights into the profound effectiveness of these strategies, while also shedding light on the intricate challenges that marked their implementation. By astutely harnessing the potential of social media platforms, the campaign encompassed various critical components, including information sharing, campaigns and hashtags, personal narratives, virtual events and discussions, as well as the dissemination of essential support networks and resources. This comprehensive approach, orchestrated synergistically, contributed to a formidable effort to heighten awareness and extend a lifeline to victims ensnared in crisis. The campaign's ability to transcend demographic boundaries and ignite robust engagement assumed paramount importance, highlighting its capacity to provide indispensable support during an unprecedented period of adversity.

Moreover, the campaign's content, messages, and hashtags achieved noticeable virality and heightened visibility, further substantiating its efficacy by reaching beyond its initial audience and permeating the broader public consciousness. Remarkably, the cultivation of user-generated content, coupled with the campaign's tangible, real-world impact, empowered victims to seek assistance while concurrently fostering a dynamic sense of empowerment among its ardent supporters.

In essence, the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign serves as a quintessential exemplar of the untapped potential within social media and communication strategies. By adroitly harnessing these platforms, such campaigns can invariably ignite heightened awareness, galvanize support, and provide pivotal resources to those ensnared in the web of gender-based violence. It remains abundantly clear that the campaign's objectives are imbued with an overarching dedication to confronting gender-based and domestic violence through a triumvirate of awareness propagation, support provision, and preventive action. Within this overarching framework, the strategic leverage of social media and communication strategies unfailingly aspires to shatter silence, propagate enlightenment, and nurture a haven of support for survivors.

This campaign, emblematic of the symbiosis between social media channels and communication strategies, underscores the inexorable potential to foment awareness, invigorate advocacy, and furnish indispensable resources for victims of gender-based violence. As such campaigns continue to adeptly navigate the digital landscape, they stand as steadfast sentinels in the ongoing battle against GBV, tirelessly striving to sculpt a more inclusive and nurturing societal tapestry.

### *7.1 The Path Forward*

The campaign's journey doesn't signal an end but rather a prologue to further exploration, research, and evaluation. To gain a comprehensive understanding of its overall impact and effectiveness, future initiatives can employ a diverse range of methodologies. This may involve a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection, including surveys and interviews, to serve as a comprehensive measure of public awareness, perception, and the campaign's real-world influence. Such a comprehensive evaluation could not only highlight the campaign's multifaceted impact within the Thai context but also potentially inform evidence-based strategies that transcend borders.

As we collectively navigate the aftermath of the pandemic and its extensive societal implications, the insights drawn from the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign extend well beyond geographic boundaries. By examining its achievements, obstacles, and the intricate interplay of social media and communication strategies, a blueprint emerges for a global conversation on combating gender-based violence. This blueprint, firmly grounded in the potential of digital platforms, has the power to shape a future where societies unite against the menace of violence. This unity is reinforced by shared understanding, empathy, and unwavering support.

In essence, the campaign's enduring impact urges us to not only recognize its successes but also acknowledge its boundless possibilities. It serves as a resounding call to action for societies worldwide to consistently leverage the potential of technology and communication. This collective effort aims to usher in an era characterized by enlightenment, empowerment, and above all, the eradication of violence against women. Throughout this journey, the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign emerges not just as a poignant testament but as an inspirational harbinger of transformation.

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## **Appendix:**

### *Interview Questions:*

1. Could you please introduce yourself and provide a brief overview of your role and responsibilities within the context of gender-based violence awareness and prevention initiatives in Thailand during the COVID-19 lockdown?
2. Can you describe the objectives and key strategies of the "Stop Violence Against Women" campaign and how it aimed to raise awareness about gender-based violence during the lockdown?
3. What were the main communication channels and platforms utilized by the campaign to reach its target audience? How did social media play a role in disseminating information and engaging the public?
4. In what ways did the campaign leverage the concept of the public sphere to foster discourse, inclusivity, and collective engagement among stakeholders in addressing gender-based violence?
5. How did the campaign engage with diverse and marginalized voices, ensuring inclusivity and intersectionality in its messaging and initiatives?
6. Can you share specific instances or examples of how the campaign facilitated participatory development, allowing survivors, advocates, and policymakers to collaborate and influence the discourse surrounding gender-based violence?
7. What challenges or obstacles did the campaign encounter in leveraging social media and communication strategies to raise awareness and support victims during the lockdown?
8. How did the campaign measure its success in terms of reaching a wider audience, generating engagement, and fostering a collective movement against gender-based violence?
9. In your view, how did the campaign contribute to breaking the silence surrounding gender-based violence and promoting a more inclusive and supportive environment for survivors?
10. Looking back, what lessons were learned from the campaign's implementation, particularly in terms of utilizing social media and communication strategies to address gender-based violence in times of crisis?

11. Based on your experience with the campaign, what recommendations or insights would you offer for future initiatives seeking to utilize social media and communication strategies to combat gender-based violence and support victims in similar contexts?