

Prophetic Communication Ethics and Digital Ta'awun in the #WargaBantuWarga Movement

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Received: 18/03/2026

Revised: 05/05/2026

Accepted: 11/06/2026

Abstract

This study analyses how the #WargaBantuWarga movement during the 2025 Sumatra floods functioned as a form of digital mass communication while manifesting the value of ta'awun in the online public sphere. This study employs a qualitative approach with a netnographic method to examine the #WargaBantuWarga movement as a practice of digital mass communication in the context of the 2025 Sumatra floods. Data were collected through digital documentation and non-participant observation, then analysed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, with source triangulation used to strengthen validity. The findings reveal that #WargaBantuWarga developed into a node of digital mass communication connecting the documentation of suffering, the dissemination of aid information, the mobilisation of donations, moral support, and criticism of the slow formal response. Conversations that continued into the post-disaster phase indicate that the hashtag moved beyond functioning as a simple issue marker and became a medium sustaining the visibility of the crisis while encouraging public engagement. Ta'awun was manifested through ta'awun maklumat, maliyah, ma'nawiyah, and amaliyah, all circulating across platforms. The study concludes that digital mass communication in disaster contexts serves not only as an informational channel, but also as a moral space that communicatively shapes solidarity, responsibility, and collective action. This study contributes to the field of communication studies, particularly digital mass communication, disaster communication, and Islamic communication ethics, by showing how online public participation during disasters can manifest ta'awun as an ethical principle embedded in digital solidarity practices.

Keywords

Mass Communication, Prophetic Ethics, Ta'awun, #WargaBantuWarga, 2025 Sumatra Floods

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1. INTRODUCTION

The 2025 Sumatra floods and landslides were among the most severe hydrometeorological crises in Indonesia at the end of November and throughout December 2025. The scale of the impact went beyond an ordinary weather disturbance because it affected three major provinces, namely Aceh, North Sumatra, and West Sumatra, with 1,204 fatalities, 140 missing persons, and approximately 111.8 thousand displaced residents as of 27 January 2026 (Marlina, 2026). The magnitude of these casualties indicates that the disaster had evolved into a humanitarian and public communication issue demanding simultaneous national attention (Li & Lin, 2023; Yin et al., 2021).



The escalation of the disaster was rooted in extreme atmospheric dynamics. BMKG recorded that Tropical Cyclone Seedling 95B intensified on 26 November 2025 and later developed into Tropical Cyclone Senyar, with the potential for heavy to extreme rainfall in Aceh, North Sumatra, West Sumatra, and surrounding areas (MDMC, 2025). Daily rainfall records also showed exceptionally high intensity, namely 310.8 mm in North Aceh, 262.2 mm in Medan, 229.7 mm in Central Tapanuli, and 154 mm in Padang Pariaman, while weak La Niña and a negative IOD strengthened the probability of rain cloud formation across western Indonesia. This situation demonstrates that, from the outset, the disaster had high shock value, triggering a concentration of public attention across a broad communication space.

The immense pressure caused by the disaster quickly encountered the limitations of response capacity during the emergency phase. Reuters (2025) reported that several affected local governments faced constraints on funding and fuel supplies to support relief operations, while reconstruction and recovery needs in Sumatra were estimated at Rp51.82 trillion. This condition confirms that the crisis unfolded not only at the physical level, but also at the level of coordination, information distribution, and the acceleration of response, making communication flows capable of reaching the masses an inseparable element of disaster management (Ejem & Ben-Enukora, 2025).

The material destruction accompanying the disaster further expanded the need for rapid, open, and cross-regional mass communication. Data as of 6 January 2026 showed that 175,126 houses were damaged, with 1,177 fatalities, 147 missing persons, and 242.2 thousand displaced residents at that time (Waspada, 2026). The massive destruction also reveals a recurring weakness in disaster risk communication: public attention often intensifies after a disaster has produced visible suffering than during the anticipatory stage. This condition cannot simply be reduced to public apathy, but should be understood as the result of low risk perception, weak preparedness literacy, limited trust in early warnings, and the absence of continuous communication that translates disaster risk into everyday social awareness. Before a disaster occurs, risk is often perceived as abstract and distant; after homes are damaged, victims are displaced, and suffering circulates visually through digital media, the crisis becomes emotionally concrete and communicatively urgent. The emergence of #WargaBantuWarga therefore reflects a reactive pattern of public disaster communication, in which collective solidarity becomes highly visible after anticipation has failed and humanitarian consequences have already been produced.

The extent of housing damage and population displacement made information on safe locations, aid distribution routes, evacuation conditions, and response priorities a public necessity that had to be addressed on a massive scale. In this context, digital space was no longer merely a supplementary medium but rather the primary arena for bringing together messages, needs, and humanitarian action (Mitchell, 2022; Yin et al., 2021).

The ecological damage that exacerbated the disaster also shaped the intensity of public conversation at the national level. Reuters noted that environmental groups viewed deforestation linked to logging and mining as having worsened the impact of the floods and landslides, while the government subsequently revoked 22 forest utilization business permits covering 1,012,016 hectares nationwide. This measure shows that the 2025 Sumatra disaster was not interpreted by the public merely as a natural event, but rather as an event that sparked debate over environmental responsibility, natural resource governance, and the protection of communities. At the global level, this debate resonates with the concerns of environmental and development-oriented community groups that question extractive development models for weakening ecological resilience and

increasing disaster vulnerability among marginal communities. Digital mass communication space thus became a site where disaster information, moral demands, and public evaluations of the causes and consequences of the disaster converged (Spialek & Houston, 2022; Taibah et al., 2020).

Digital connectivity during the emergency period also proved to be a highly tangible necessity. The Government of North Sumatra Province received assistance with Starlink internet service from the Ministry of Communication and Digital Affairs to strengthen communication access at disaster points, while the ministry, together with MyRepublic, provided free 500 Mbps internet access for one year to six schools affected by flooding in North Sumatra. This fact illustrates that in times of crisis, communication infrastructure is not merely an administrative tool, but part of humanitarian infrastructure that supports coordination, access to information, service recovery, and the continuity of basic social activities.

The phenomenon of #WargaBantuWarga gained momentum amid conditions in which public needs moved faster than the capacity of a fully centralized response. Tempo (2025) reported that the fundraising initiative launched by Ferry Irwandi for victims of the Sumatra floods reached Rp10,374,064,800 within just 24 hours. This achievement demonstrates that widely circulated digital messages were capable of transforming empathy into concrete participation, connecting dispersed audiences into collective action, and accelerating the flow of aid on a mass scale. At this point, the hashtag no longer functioned merely as a topic marker, but as a communication محور that united public attention, emotion, and action.

The circulation of messages generated through this movement positioned digital mass communication as the core of contemporary solidarity practices (Esposito & Semenzin, 2025). Messages concerning logistical needs, the conditions of evacuees, road access, donation account numbers, and calls to share were repeatedly disseminated, forwarded across accounts, and reached audiences far beyond the directly affected areas. A process of this kind shows that digital audiences do not function merely as spectators of information, but also as disseminators of messages, contributors of resources, and reinforcers of the moral legitimacy of relief action. Such characteristics make #WargaBantuWarga worthy of being understood as a living practice of mass communication, one that moves rapidly and possesses a high capacity for social mobilization (Dzisah, 2024; Rodin & Khrennikov, 2023).

The communication character that reaches the masses simultaneously requires a strong ethical foundation. Message flows in disaster situations are not sufficient merely by being rapid and viral, because the safety of victims and public trust depend on the accuracy of information, responsibility in aid management, clarity of communication, and wisdom in shaping the collective atmosphere (Buchenrieder et al., 2021). The value of ta'awun becomes important in this context because assistance does not stop at the act of giving, but operates through communication processes that connect knowledge, care, and broad public participation. Prophetic communication ethics acquires its relevance precisely when humanitarian assistance moves through digital mass channels that demand honesty, trustworthiness, and an orientation toward the common good.

The Previous studies on digital disaster communication have generally emphasized the instrumental role of communication technology in accelerating information dissemination, strengthening coordination, and expanding public participation during emergency situations. Abedin et al. (2022) and Hareesh and Guru (2025), for instance, show that ICT, mobile-based communication, early warning systems, and social media analytics can enhance community capacity in responding to floods and other disasters. Their studies indicate that digital platforms are valuable because they

connect victims, volunteers, and the wider public through faster, more flexible communication flows. This line of research is important because it confirms that disaster response in contemporary society increasingly depends on the speed, accessibility, and connectivity of digital communication infrastructures.

A different but related body of scholarship emphasizes the design of risk communication, community leadership, and contextualized disaster narratives. Zajac et al. (2025) demonstrate that AI-enhanced storytelling can strengthen public understanding of flood risk by making risk information more locally meaningful, while Zolkefli et al. (2025) show that media technology supports community-based disaster management through coordination, emergency information distribution, and public mobilization. These studies collectively highlight the importance of technology, leadership, and narrative strategy in disaster communication. The present study extends this discussion by shifting the focus from the technical effectiveness of digital media to the ethical and moral dimensions of digital mass communication. Unlike previous studies that mainly examine communication technology, risk management, or community coordination, this study analyzes how #WargaBantuWarga manifested ta'awun through prophetic communication ethics in the context of public solidarity during the 2025 Sumatra floods.

This study employs Connective Action theory as the main framework for explaining how the #WargaBantuWarga movement operated as a practice of digital mass communication in a disaster situation (Lance Bennett & Segerberg, 2015). The theory developed by Bennett and Segerberg argues that public mobilization in the digital era does not always depend on formal organizations, centralized leadership, or rigid collective structures, but can instead grow through fluid and participatory communication networks united by shared symbols such as hashtags, solidarity narratives, and the distribution of personal messages that expand into the public sphere. The relevance of this theory lies in its ability to explain how aid messages, donation appeals, information about victims' needs, and calls for care within the #WargaBantuWarga phenomenon spread rapidly from one account to another, forming a spontaneous yet directed mass involvement. This framework is important because it shows that digital mass communication during the 2025 Sumatra disaster did not function merely as a flow of information, but also as a mechanism connecting empathy, participation, and citizens' collective action within a broad networked space.

The horizon of this study, therefore, lies in understanding how the #WargaBantuWarga movement functioned as a practice of digital mass communication that manifested ta'awun amid the 2025 Sumatra Floods. Scientifically, this study contributes to communication studies by extending the discussion of digital disaster communication beyond information dissemination and emergency mobilization towards an ethical understanding of how solidarity, responsibility, and collective action are constructed through online public participation. The large scale of casualties, the enormous recovery needs, the constraints of emergency response, the importance of digital connectivity, and the scale of public mobilization through online spaces formed a strong empirical context for examining the relationship between communication, solidarity, and moral responsibility. This focus means that the discussion of prophetic communication ethics does not remain in an abstract domain, but is rooted directly in the reality that messages circulating in digital spaces helped determine the direction of public concern and collective action during the disaster.

2. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research design with a netnographic approach to examine the #WargaBantuWarga movement as a practice of digital mass communication in the context of the 2025 Sumatra floods (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2020; Wa-Mbaleka & Rosario, 2023). This choice is grounded in the character of the object of study, which emerged, circulated, and acquired meaning within digital spaces through messages, user interactions, and the dissemination of solidarity narratives across various platforms. A netnographic approach was selected because it enables researchers to observe public communication practices naturally occurring in online media without directly involving participants. The sources of research data consist of primary and secondary data (Gleeson, 2021; Takona, 2024). The primary data comprise posts, captions, comments, hashtags, and digital conversations related to #WargaBantuWarga on Twitter/X and TikTok. The secondary data consist of online news reports and digital monitoring data compiled through Brand24. The use of Brand24 is intended to assist the researcher in mapping the intensity of conversations, the distribution of issues, sentiment tendencies, and the relationships among narratives across sources during the disaster phase. This selection of sources was chosen so that the study could capture the #WargaBantuWarga movement not only as a social media phenomenon, but also as a flow of public communication that extends into news media and reaches a broader audience.

Data collection was conducted through digital documentation and non-participant observation (Baum, 2021). Digital documentation was conducted by collecting posts, screenshots, comments, news reports, and Brand24 monitoring results relevant to the study's focus. Non-participant observation was conducted by observing communication flows on Twitter/X, TikTok, and online media without engaging in direct interaction with users, so this study did not involve interviews. Data collection focused on content that called for assistance, distributed information on victims' needs, featured donation drives, offered moral support, and presented solidarity narratives that demonstrated the manifestation of ta'awun in the #WargaBantuWarga movement during the 2025 Sumatra floods.

The data analysis technique was carried out through the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2020). Data reduction involved selecting the content most relevant to the study's focus and grouping it into themes such as the dissemination of aid information, donation mobilization, moral support, and the strengthening of public legitimacy. Data display was conducted thematically to show the patterns of message circulation and the meanings formed in digital mass communication. A conclusion was drawn by interpreting the findings through Connective Action theory to explain how digital networks enabled fluid, broad collective participation, while netnography was used to examine how the language and narratives of assistance manifested the value of ta'awun. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation by comparing data from Twitter/X, TikTok, online news reports, and Brand24 to cross-verify the consistency of themes, the direction of narratives, and communication patterns (Flick, 2022).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. The Practice of Mass Communication in #WargaBantuWarga during the 2025 Sumatra Floods

The development of the #WargaBantuWarga movement during the 2025 Sumatra flood disaster demonstrates how digital mass communication shaped the flow of public solidarity in online spaces. Conversations circulating across various social media platforms show that messages concerning aid, victims' needs, and donation appeals were not only conveyed by certain actors but were continuously reproduced by other users, thereby forming a broad circulation of communication. This communication character indicates that digital audiences no longer merely functioned as recipients of

information but also played an active role as disseminators of messages, expanding the reach of solidarity. In this context, the hashtag #WargaBantuWarga served as a mass communication platform, enabling humanitarian messages to spread rapidly and reach a wider public.

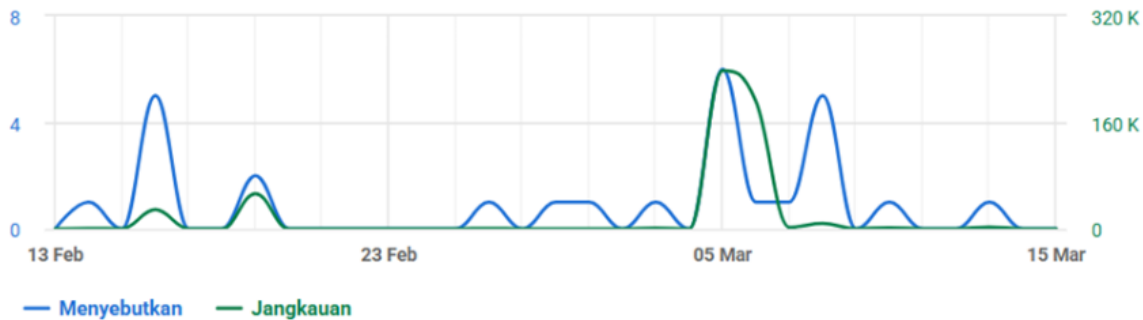


Figure 1. Trends in Mentions and Reach of #WargaBantuWarga

The analysis of Brand24 monitoring data shows that the intensity of conversations concerning #WargaBantuWarga fluctuated throughout the observation period. The largest spike was observed in early March 2026, when the number of mentions increased sharply to around 6-7 major mentions within one monitoring period, with audience reach exceeding 160 thousand users. After this peak, the graph shows a decline in conversation intensity in mid to late March. Although there was a decrease compared with the peak of public attention in late 2025 and early 2026, when the disaster was in its most critical phase, conversations regarding #WargaBantuWarga continued to appear consistently with several new waves of mentions. This condition indicates that, although public attention began to decline over time, the hashtag still served as a channel of public communication, sustaining the circulation of solidarity and aid messages within the sphere of digital mass communication.

The latest mentions of #WargaBantuWarga recorded in Brand24 indicate that conversations about the 2025 Sumatra floods had not completely disappeared, although their intensity was no longer as high as during the peak disaster phase in late 2025 and early 2026. The continuing flow of conversations from mid-February to mid-March 2026 shows that the hashtag was still being used to document post-disaster conditions, criticize the slow response of authorities, encourage public donations, and emphasize citizens' self-help practices in the field. The following data summary was compiled from a number of the most representative mentions to illustrate the direction of issues, sentiment, and forms of digital mass communication surrounding #WargaBantuWarga.

Table 1. Latest mentions of #WargaBantuWarga based on Brand24 captures

No	Account/Media	Platform	Date	Core Message	Main Theme
1	mirwantanjung07	TikTok	15-02-2026	A post containing prayers and a call for protection for victims of floods and landslides using the hashtags #wargabantuwarga and #sumatraberduka.	Emergency phase and disaster grief
2	Warga Bantu Warga di Aceh Tamiang	YouTube	16-02-2026	Documentation of the condition of schools and residents in Aceh Tamiang who were still	Documentation of post-disaster impacts

				affected even though the floods had faded from public news coverage.	
3	fathiahairuza	TikTok	19-02-2026	A relief visit to East Aceh showing that conditions two months after the disaster were still far from adequate and still required public support.	Post-disaster recovery crisis
4	Kanal Perspektif	Online media	28-02-2026	An article assessing the virality of #wargabantuwarga as an indicator of the limited presence of the state in flood management.	Criticism of the state
5	fainomady	TikTok	03-03-2026	Volunteers used wood carried by the floodwaters to build temporary shelters while questioning the government's role.	Citizens' self-help and policy criticism
6	rumahzakatacehofficial	TikTok	05-03-2026	Content showing the activity of cooking meals for flood survivors in Aceh Tamiang at the main evacuation post.	Direct relief action
7	dometdhuafawaspada	TikTok	06-03-2026	An appeal to strengthen the people of Aceh Tamiang so that they could rise again after the destruction caused by the floods.	Mobilisation of support and donations
8	najwa.nurawalia	TikTok	07-03-2026	A post highlighting children who were still studying in evacuation tents and inviting the public to support recovery efforts.	Public empathy and educational assistance
9	rereirene95	X/Twitter	07-03-2026	A user stressed that public attention had started to fade even though some areas were still flooded and road	Declining attention and the continuation of the crisis

				repairs were being carried out by residents themselves.	
10	musyaffaazka	X/Twitter	08-03-2026	A tweet describing chaotic road conditions and the absence of officials, so that relief efforts operated under the logic of citizens helping citizens.	Absence of formal response
11	thenkchu	X/Twitter	08-03-2026	A tweet stating that the floods had not yet been handled, local government was nowhere to be seen, and the entire response depended on residents.	Criticism of government capacity
12	kanalperspektif.com, Warga Bantu Warga dalam Banjir Sumatera	Online media	05-03-2026	A journalistic piece opening broader discussion on the practice of citizens helping citizens as a civic response to disaster.	Media reflection on citizens' solidarity

The distribution of data in Table 1 shows that the latest mentions of #WargaBantuWarga were dominated by TikTok, followed by X/Twitter, and then reinforced by online media and YouTube. The dominance of TikTok indicates that the practice of digital mass communication in this issue largely moved through visual content, short testimonies, and easy-to-share appeals. The presence of X/Twitter remained important because the platform became a space for criticism, complaints, and more direct public evaluations of disaster response. The composition of sentiment also shows a fairly clear tendency. Negative tones were more dominant than positive and neutral ones because most recent mentions no longer focused on the initial phase of shock but rather on disappointment with the slowness of recovery. Posts by fathiahairuza, rereirene95, musyaffaazka, and thenkchu show that residents still viewed the flood as an unfinished crisis, especially as field conditions remained severe while public attention began to decline.

The continuity of post-disaster problems emerged as a prominent theme in the data. Content from YouTube about Aceh Tamiang, the post by fathiahairuza in East Aceh, and the post by najwa.Nurawalia about children still studying in evacuation tents emphasizes that the impact of the floods did not end when the water began to recede. The post-disaster phase instead emerged as a new communication space that shifted the focus from emergency rescue to the needs for recovery, education, housing, and the sustainability of life for affected residents (Ejem & Ben-Enukora, 2025; Song et al., 2022). Criticism of the state and government appeared as a very strong layer of meaning in these recent conversations. The article "Pemerintah Yang Acuh Menangani Banjir di Indonesia" explicitly interpreted the virality of #WargaBantuWarga as an indicator of the state's weak presence. A similar tone appeared in the tweets by musyaffaazka, rereirene95, thenkchu, and the post by

fainomady, all of which conveyed the perception that residents were forced to fill gaps in response that should have been carried out more systematically by formal authorities.

Citizens' self-help practices emerged as the core of the movement, which continued to be sustained in the conversations. The post by fainomady about the use of flood-borne wood for temporary shelters, the content by rumahzakatacehofficial regarding cooking for survivors, and the appeal from dompetdhuafawaspada show that #WargaBantuWarga did not stop at being a moral slogan. The hashtag functioned as a marker of concrete action linking digital messages with fieldwork, ranging from the provision of food to support for community recovery (Ida et al., 2022). A more positive flow of communication remained, although its proportion was not as large as that of expressions of criticism. The content by dompetdhuafawaspada and najwa.Nurawalia shows that, at this stage, digital mass communication also moved through the production of empathy, the strengthening of hope, and calls for public participation (Chaparro-Domínguez et al., 2021). The presence of such positive sentiment is important because it ensured that the flood issue was not framed solely as a failure of response, but also as a space for mobilizing care and social energy to help residents recover.

The role of online media and YouTube expanded the reach of the meaning of the hashtag into a more reflective domain. Kanalperspektif and the Aceh Tamiang video documentation show that #WargaBantuWarga did not only live in personal posts, but was also processed into journalistic narratives that framed citizens' solidarity as a social phenomenon worthy of broader discussion. The presence of these media strengthened the character of digital mass communication because messages did not stop at interpersonal circulation, but entered the arena of more structured public discourse production (Buhmann & Fieseler, 2021; Cabrera et al., 2021). Temporal change was also clearly visible in this collection of recent mentions. Public attention did decline compared with the peak of the floods in December 2025 and early January 2026, but the issue had not truly disappeared by March 2026. This pattern indicates that #WargaBantuWarga underwent a transformation from an emergency response hashtag into a marker of crisis memory, the continuation of citizens' suffering, and a reminder that recovery was not yet complete in the field.

The overall pattern confirms that #WargaBantuWarga functioned as a practice of digital mass communication that combined the documentation of suffering, expressions of criticism, aid mobilization, and the reproduction of solidarity within a single interconnected flow of messages. The hashtag no longer merely marked a topic of conversation but operated as a node of public communication that sustained the visibility of the 2025 Sumatra flood crisis amid declining general attention. This position makes #WargaBantuWarga important to read as a medium connecting citizens' voices, victims' needs, and collective action within the landscape of post-disaster digital mass communication. The findings on the fluctuation of mentions, the continuity of post-disaster conversations, the dominance of cross-platform content, and the reproduction of messages by residents, volunteers, institutional accounts, and online media reveal a strong correspondence with Connective Action theory. Within this framework, the #WargaBantuWarga movement did not depend on formal organization, centralized leadership, or a rigid command structure, but instead grew through fluid digital communication networks with the hashtag serving as the main symbolic connector among users. The pattern of mentions that remained visible until March 2026, although declining in intensity compared with the peak disaster phase, shows that public participation moved through the personalization of messages, in which citizens' experiences, documentation of suffering, criticism of the state, donation appeals, and self-help practices were bound together by a shared

narrative that was easily forwarded and reinterpreted by audiences. This characteristic confirms that #WargaBantuWarga operated as a connective frame that transformed individual expression into collective engagement, so that digital mass communication in the case of the 2025 Sumatra floods was shaped not merely by institutional mobilization, but by the accumulation of communicative actions by residents who were mutually connected, mutually reinforcing, and mutually expanding the reach of solidarity in digital spaces.

3.2. Prophetic Communication Ethics: The Manifestation of Ta'awun in #WargaBantuWarga

Prophetic communication ethics in the #WargaBantuWarga movement are evident not only in the content of messages calling for assistance, but also in how those messages were constructed, disseminated, and directed toward public welfare during the 2025 Sumatra floods. In this context, digital space did not merely function as a site for information exchange, but developed into a moral arena in which citizens expressed care, honesty about field conditions, social responsibility, and collective appeals to help one another (Gündüzöz, 2021; Purnomo, 2025). The manifestation of ta'awun can therefore be understood through various forms of communication that emerged in digital conversations, ranging from the documentation of suffering, the dissemination of information on victims' needs, the mobilization of material assistance, and moral support, to the strengthening of public participation in post-disaster recovery.

Table 2. The manifestation of ta'awun in the #WargaBantuWarga movement during the 2025 Sumatra floods

No	Representative Data/Account	Form of Communication	Manifestation of Ta'awun	Indication of Prophetic Communication Ethics
1	mirwantanjung07, najwa.nurawalia	Prayer, empathy, moral encouragement	Ta'awun ma'nawiyah	Messages that cultivate care, consolation, and hope for victims
2	Warga Bantu Warga di Aceh Tamiang, fathiahairuza	Documentation of post-disaster field conditions	Ta'awun maklumat	Factual information on victims' conditions and recovery needs
3	dompetdhuafawaspada, rumahzakatacehofficial	Calls for assistance and direct humanitarian action	Ta'awun maliyah and amaliyah	Messages directed towards the collection and distribution of tangible aid
4	fainomady	Narrative of building temporary shelters from limited available resources	Ta'awun amaliyah	Collective citizen action presented as a concrete solution to emergency needs
5	musyaffaazka, thenkchu, rereirene95	Criticism of the slow formal response	Ta'awun maklumat and social ta'awun	Messages emphasising the real situation so that the public

				does not neglect the suffering of victims
6	Pemerintah Yang Acuh Menangani Banjir di Indonesia	Media reflection on the weak presence of the state	Ta'awun maklumat	The production of public discourse to expand social awareness and demands for responsibility
7	kanalperspektif.com	Framing citizens' solidarity as a civic response	Ta'awun ma'nawiyah and social ta'awun	Messages strengthening the moral legitimacy of the citizens-helping-citizens movement
8	The entire cross-platform flow of #WargaBantuWarga	Reproduction of messages of aid, needs, and care	Integration of ta'awun maklumat, maliyah, ma'nawiyah, and amaliyah	Communication directed towards public welfare, openness about the situation, and the mobilisation of public participation

The data in Table 2 show that ta'awun in the #WargaBantuWarga movement did not appear in a single form, but emerged as a layered communication practice. The first layer is visible in ta'awun ma'nawiyah, namely moral assistance expressed through prayer, empathy, psychological encouragement, and narratives of hope. Posts such as those by mirwantanjung07 and najwa.nurawalia shows that digital communication reduced the emotional distance between victims and the public, making online space a site for the emergence of affective support that strengthened the social resilience of disaster victims.

At the same time, the manifestation of ta'awun in digital disaster communication should not be understood uncritically. Social media also creates the possibility that disaster narratives are transformed into performative content, where victims' suffering is displayed to gain visibility, engagement, or personal recognition rather than to strengthen humanitarian response. This ambivalence shows that not every act of documenting disaster can automatically be interpreted as ethical communication. Within the framework of prophetic communication ethics, digital content related to disasters must therefore be assessed by its orientation: whether it provides truthful information, protects victims' dignity, directs audiences towards assistance, and strengthens collective responsibility, or whether it merely turns suffering into a spectacle for personal gain.

The next layer appears as ta'awun maklumat, namely assistance through the delivery of relevant, factual, and useful information to the public. Documentation of post-disaster conditions in Aceh Tamiang and East Aceh shows that information about mud, affected schools, evacuation sites, and the slow pace of recovery did not merely serve as reports on the situation, but also as moral appeals to the public to recognize the reality still faced by victims. Its importance lies in information serving as an entry point for aid, because social concern cannot grow without sufficient knowledge of field conditions.

Another highly prominent dimension is found in ta'awun maliyah and amaliyah (Dewantoro &

Susilo, 2025). The content of *dompethduafawaspada* and *rumahzakatacehofficial* shows that digital communication was directed at connecting solidarity messages with material assistance and direct humanitarian action. This practice demonstrates that messages on social media did not stop at expressing sympathy but moved towards mobilizing resources, providing food, and offering tangible support to affected citizens. The post by *fainomady* about building temporary shelters from wood carried by floodwaters further emphasizes that *ta'awun* also lives through practical collective work, when residents make use of what is available to respond to urgent needs. The character of prophetic communication ethics becomes even more evident when aid messages are conveyed with an orientation towards the common good rather than merely to create sensation (Sikumbang et al., 2024). Documentation of field conditions, appeals for assistance, and explanations regarding victims' needs demonstrate efforts to produce communication that is honest about the situation, responsible towards victims' fates, and clear in directing public action. Such ethical values are important because disasters always create the possibility for vague information, fleeting attention, or sympathy that does not lead to action. The *#WargaBantuWarga* movement, instead, shows the opposite tendency: communication that seeks to maintain the visibility of suffering so that aid continues to flow.

Criticism of the state that appeared in a number of tweets and media articles also needs to be understood as part of the manifestation of *ta'awun*, rather than merely as an expression of anger. The tweets by *musyaffaazka*, *thinkchu*, *rereirene95*, as well as the article about a government perceived as indifferent, present criticism as a form of social concern grounded in the desire that victims should not be abandoned. In this context, criticism serves as a reminder, sustaining public awareness of the crisis still unfolding. Its social function lies in the attempt to correct the slowness of the formal response while simultaneously maintaining moral pressure so that disaster management does not stop at the level of discourse. The role of online media and reflective channels such as *kanalperspektif* expands the meaning of *ta'awun* from a spontaneous act into a more structured social discourse. When citizens' solidarity is framed as a civic response to disaster, digital communication shifts from the personal to the broader public. This shift is important because it shows that *ta'awun* is not only practiced by individuals who directly help, but is also reinforced by narratives that confer moral legitimacy on the movement. This process prevents citizens' solidarity from disappearing too quickly from public memory, even as the intensity of general attention declines.

The overall pattern confirms that *#WargaBantuWarga* is a space in which prophetic communication ethics are manifested through the integration of information, action, moral support, and social responsibility. The movement demonstrates that *ta'awun* in digital mass communication is not only about helping, but also about how that assistance is communicated openly, directed clearly, and maintained in its orientation so that it remains aligned with the safety and recovery of victims. This meaning is what makes *#WargaBantuWarga* worthy of being understood as a practice of public communication that is not only broad in its reach but also strong in its moral substance in confronting disaster.

Discussion

These findings indicate that *#WargaBantuWarga* developed as a practice of digital mass communication operating through the circulation of aid messages, documentation of field conditions, donation appeals, and the reproduction of public solidarity across platforms. This character shows that communication flows in disaster situations are no longer fully monopolized by formal institutions or mainstream media, but are jointly produced by citizens, volunteers, philanthropic accounts, social

media creators, and online media within an interconnected communication network. This context confirms that during the 2025 Sumatra disaster, digital space served as an arena for the dissemination of social concern, rapidly and massively expanding the reach of humanitarian messages (Gogoi et al., 2025; Stepanov, 2025).

The next direction of the findings shows that the strength of digital mass communication in the #WargaBantuWarga movement did not end in the emergency response phase, but remained active in the post-disaster phase. Mentions that persisted until March 2026 indicate that the hashtag shifted from a marker of emergency to one of crisis memory and the continuation of citizens' suffering. This shift is important because it shows that digital communication in disaster contexts is not always temporary or seasonal, but can sustain the visibility of an issue when general attention begins to decline. The continuity of such conversations makes the hashtag a public reminder that social recovery has not been completed, even though the intensity of media coverage has declined.

Another layer of these findings lies in the emergence of a moral dimension within these digital communication flows. The messages circulating did not merely convey data and field conditions, but also carried appeals for empathy, reinforcement of hope, criticism of the slowness of formal responses, and calls to take action to help. This pattern shows that digital mass communication in #WargaBantuWarga did not operate solely as a channel of information, but also as a space for the formation of social responsibility. Ta'awun, in this context, appears as a communication practice that bridges knowledge, affect, and action, so that public solidarity moves from the level of attention to that of concrete participation. This reading is consistent with and simultaneously extends the findings of Abedin et al. (2022) and Hareesh and Guru (2025), which position communication technology and social media as important instruments in disaster response. Both studies emphasize that digital technology can accelerate the dissemination of information, strengthen coordination, and facilitate connectivity among victims, volunteers, and the public. The findings of this study affirm those functions while showing a more social and communicative context: in the case of #WargaBantuWarga, aid messages moved not only because of technological capacity but also because solidarity narratives were continually reproduced by citizens within digital mass communication spaces.

A further extension is evident when these findings are compared with those of Zajac et al. (2025) and Zolkefli et al. (2025). Both studies focus on the role of AI, contextual storytelling, and community leadership in strengthening disaster communication. The findings of this study reveal a different dimension, because #WargaBantuWarga did not move primarily through technology-based communication design or structured community leadership, but through message flows that grew out of citizen participation, personal experience, and the dissemination of the hashtag as a shared node of meaning. This difference indicates that the effectiveness of disaster communication in the context of the 2025 Sumatra floods rested precisely on the ability of digital symbols to connect individual expressions into collective solidarity.

Within the framework of Connective Action theory (2015), all of these findings show that #WargaBantuWarga functioned as a connective frame that bound together various experiences, complaints, documentation of suffering, and calls for assistance into a shared narrative. The hashtag did not merely serve as a technical marker for searching for an issue, but was transformed into a connective symbol that enabled personal messages to gain broad public resonance. This character is consistent with the main assumption of Connective Action, namely that digital mobilization does not always require formal organization and centralized leadership, because participation can grow from fluid, flexible, and easily replicated communication networks. When the experiences of citizens

dispersed across TikTok, X, YouTube, and online media mutually reinforced one another, what operated was not a logic of command, but a logic of connectivity. Every post displaying victims' conditions, criticism of the state, donation appeals, or volunteer activities became a point of connection that invited new participation from other audiences. This pattern shows that digital mass communication in the #WargaBantuWarga movement was shaped by the personalization of messages that still generated collective effects. Its mass reach, therefore, emerged not from the homogeneity of messages but from the hashtag's ability to unite the diversity of citizens' expressions under a single orientation of solidarity.

A further theoretical implication is the sustainability of the movement. Connective Action helps explain why conversations about #WargaBantuWarga continued even though their intensity declined after the peak disaster phase. That persistence emerged because the hashtag provided a space that could continuously be refilled with new experiences, new needs, and new forms of concern. This condition shows that digital mass communication in disasters is not only reactive to events, but also adaptive to the changing phases of crisis. This theory is therefore relevant for understanding that digital solidarity networks do not stop when formal structures weaken, but can continue to live through the interconnection of messages produced by citizens.

The novelty of this study lies in its reading of #WargaBantuWarga not merely as a tool of disaster communication or a medium of digital mobilization, but as a practice of digital mass communication that manifests ta'awun in the forms of information, material assistance, moral support, social criticism, and collective post-disaster action. This contribution broadens the discussion of digital disaster studies, which has so far largely focused on technological effectiveness, risk management, or community coordination, towards an understanding that citizens' communication flows also contain a strong moral dimension. Its novelty lies in the integration of digital mass communication, citizen participation networks, and the manifestation of ta'awun within one concrete empirical context, namely the 2025 Sumatra floods, so that the #WargaBantuWarga movement can be understood as a node of public solidarity that is at once communicative, collective, and ethically grounded.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the #WargaBantuWarga movement during the 2025 Sumatra floods developed into a practice of digital mass communication, connecting information, empathy, criticism, and collective action within a single flow of public solidarity. The findings demonstrate that the hashtag did not function merely as an issue marker but also as a communication node that enabled citizens, volunteers, philanthropic accounts, digital creators, and online media to become interconnected in the process of disseminating aid messages. The pattern of conversations that persisted into the post-disaster phase confirms that digital communication in crisis situations does not stop at delivering emergency information, but also helps sustain the visibility of victims' suffering, expand social concern, and maintain public encouragement to remain involved. The manifestation of ta'awun is visible through the dissemination of factual information, the mobilization of material assistance, moral support, and social criticism oriented towards the interests of victims and collective recovery.

On that basis, this study argues that the academic anxiety surrounding digital disaster communication stems from the tendency to view online solidarity merely as rapid information circulation or spontaneous humanitarian mobilization. The findings show that #WargaBantuWarga is more complex than a technical communication channel because it operates as an ethical arena where

public participation, criticism of institutional response, victim visibility, and the moral obligation of ta'awun are simultaneously negotiated. Therefore, disaster communication management in the digital era should not only prioritize the speed of information dissemination but also strengthen ethical accountability, openness, respect for victims' dignity, and citizen participation, so that digital solidarity does not become merely performative but remains oriented towards recovery, responsibility, and collective humanitarian action. Disaster management institutions, media organizations, and humanitarian agencies need to regard public hashtags as important partners in extending the reach of messages and mobilizing social solidarity more responsively. Future research agendas may deepen the analysis across more diverse platforms, expand the observation period, and examine how the dynamics of sentiment, content visuality, and patterns of user interaction shape the sustainability of digital solidarity during the disaster recovery phase. The development of such studies is important so that digital mass communication is understood not merely as a technical medium, but also as a moral and social space that determines the quality of humanitarian response.

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