

Digital Philanthropy Practices Through TikTok at Sobat Peduli Anak Indonesia Orphanage in Deli Serdang Regency**Nur Aida Al-Farani^{a,1}, Ahmed Fernanda Desky^{b,2}**^a Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Medan^b Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Medan^{1*} aida0604221006@uinsu.ac.id² ahmedfernandadesky@uinsu.ac.id***Abstract***

Advances in digital technology have brought about changes in philanthropic practices, which are no longer limited to in-person activities but are now increasingly conducted through digital media. This study aims to analyze digital philanthropy practices on TikTok carried out by the "Sobat Peduli Anak Indonesia" orphanage in Deli Serdang Regency. Additionally, this study seeks to identify the forms of interaction that occur between the orphanage—as a philanthropic actor—and its donors. Digital philanthropy utilizing the TikTok platform is the primary focus, particularly the use of narratives and religious symbols to foster donor participation and trust. This study employs a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. Data were collected through observations of TikTok usage in the process of digital philanthropy and interviews with five relevant informants. The results reveal the process of digital philanthropy via TikTok carried out by the "Sobat Peduli Anak Indonesia" orphanage, which leverages social capital such as values, norms, social networks, and trust. Consequently, digital philanthropy has experienced rapid growth in its ability to raise funds on a broad scale.

Keywords: *Digital philanthropy, Deli Serdang, Orphanage, TikTok*

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**1. Introduction**

Advancing technology has changed the way individuals communicate, engage in social activities within society, and interact with one another. Activities that were previously carried out directly are now increasingly conducted through digital media (Riyana & Muhid, 2025). These changes demonstrate that social media spaces have become part of individuals' collective decision-making processes in seeking information, making decisions, and building the identities that each individual presents. Digital spaces are also utilized for online donation activities, demonstrating that digital philanthropy practices are not only carried out traditionally but have also developed through modern social media platforms (Setyawati, S. M. I., Rahmanto, A. N., & Satyawan, 2021).

Digital philanthropy activities involve many individuals in sharing and voluntarily giving something to those in need. Another term for philanthropy is online donation, which helps communities address various issues, particularly in the social and religious fields (Kraeger & Phillips, 2022). In the Christian faith, for example, philanthropy refers to actions taken to address poverty as an expression of concern for others. Acts 2:44–45 describes the life of a group of people with a strong sense of communal and familial solidarity who sold their possessions in order to meet the needs of others. Furthermore, Christianity teaches that the wealth one possesses is incomparable to the wealth one has before God (Ngurah et al., 2021).

Digital philanthropy practices have increasingly developed through social media, one example being the TikTok platform. This platform has been widely used by various social groups.

Features available on the platform, such as short video uploads, live streaming, and gifts, have become forms of donation used by donors to support orphanages through social media (Koswara, 2025). These features are commonly used during live broadcasts, which are now increasingly utilized by orphanages, particularly in North Sumatra. The content presented during live broadcasts also incorporates religious identities and social actions as part of philanthropic practices, providing social support accompanied by moral and faith-based accountability (Fadillah, 2025).

Online donation activities through social media can facilitate the implementation of philanthropic activities and expand the reach of donor participation. However, donations can also be misused, particularly by exploiting public trust in charitable practices for personal gain (Makhrus & Saepudin, 2023). There have been 832 cases of fraud involving fake donations through social media platforms such as YouTube, X, Instagram, and Facebook. These fraudulent activities have taken the form of appeals for animal rescue, assistance for groups affected by disasters, and the use of emotionally appealing messages to attract viewers, while the donation proceeds were subsequently misused. Thus, such fraud exploits viewers' emotions and trust in the accounts involved (Acharya et al., 2025).

In the North Sumatra region, a case of fraud also occurred in 2023 and involved the management of the Tunas Kasih Olayama Raya Foundation orphanage. The fraud was carried out through the TikTok social media platform, where an account was initially created and orphaned children were involved in digital philanthropic activities (Zulpan et al., 2023). Initially, donors developed trust in the foundation and subsequently made donations. However, this trust was violated through live streaming activities. The foundation exploited the children by recording them while they were sleeping at night. The foundation owner also embezzled the donated funds. The impact of this case on several official institutions in North Sumatra was significant. As a result, many institutions began presenting financial reports and conducting digital philanthropy practices through TikTok with reasonable time limits (Putri, 2024).

Previous studies have discussed digital philanthropy practices. For example, the study by Khoirunnisa et al. (2024) stated that the Kita Bisa.com platform represents a resonance between technology, knowledge, and religious values within the dynamic context of Indonesian society, particularly through digital philanthropy activities. Furthermore, Koswara (2025) stated that TikTok is an effective platform for philanthropy and can serve as a viral medium for increasing donation participation, although it also carries the risk of fraud. The study by Ngurah et al. (2021) focused on analyzing philanthropic practices based on Acts 2:44–45 as the church's response to poverty and emphasized Christ's love as the foundation for giving. Based on previous studies, several gaps remain, including the lack of discussion concerning institutional contexts that specifically focus on orphanages in North Sumatra, the use of the live streaming feature on TikTok, and the ways in which religious symbols are utilized as a form of negotiation within digital philanthropic practices.

Therefore, this study will be conducted in Deli Serdang Regency at Sobat Peduli Anak Indonesia Orphanage, which conducts digital philanthropic practices through the TikTok platform. The use of the live streaming feature, which emphasizes religious narratives or symbols, becomes one of the elements contributing to viewers' trust and supporting the continuity of digital philanthropic practices. This study does not focus on the TikTok algorithm or comparisons with other social media platforms. Instead, it focuses on the live streaming feature of the TikTok application and analyzes forms of interaction among donors, providing insights into digital philanthropy practices within the community of North Sumatra.

2. Methods

This study employs a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. Qualitative research is an approach that helps obtain information directly from natural conditions. This study

aims to answer the research questions formulated in the research problems, which will subsequently be described in depth regarding the strategies, interactions, and responses generated in the implementation of digital philanthropy. Thus, the data obtained are inductive in nature and are able to comprehensively describe digital practices and strategies through TikTok conducted by Sobat Peduli Orphanage in Deli Serdang Regency (Sugiyono, 2023).

The data collection techniques in this study were carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation. The main objective was to obtain accurate data regarding the digital philanthropy practices conducted by Sobat Peduli Orphanage in Deli Serdang Regency. Observations were conducted for 2–3 months both online and directly through the TikTok platform. This was intended to determine how frequently Sobat Peduli Anak Indonesia Orphanage uses TikTok to collect donations. There were five informants in this study, divided into two types, namely primary informants and supporting informants. The primary informants consisted of the foundation supervisor, the orphanage manager, and donors. Meanwhile, the supporting informants were beneficiaries or donation recipients, namely the foster children of Sobat Peduli Anak Indonesia Orphanage (Hasanah, 2016).

This study was conducted through several procedures that had to be followed, such as protecting the rights and comfort of all informants throughout the research process. Before conducting observations and interviews in the field, the researcher submitted a research permission letter to Sobat Peduli Anak Indonesia Orphanage in Deli Serdang Regency. The questions asked were also adjusted to the knowledge and experiences of the informants, and the informants had the freedom to choose whether or not to answer the questions. For underage informants, namely the foster children of Sobat Peduli Anak Indonesia Orphanage, the research was conducted with permission from the guardian or foundation owner, and all information was kept confidential without exception. Interviews were also conducted under the close supervision of the foundation owner and other administrators (Alvin Rivaldi et al., 2023).

The results of this study will be analyzed and described in depth based on actual facts found in the field. Miles and Huberman (1984) stated that in order to achieve good final results, data analysis must be conducted interactively and continuously until the process is completed. Thus, the data become saturated and the final results can be obtained. In this study, data analysis was conducted through three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Moleong, 2024). Interviews and observations were conducted, followed by data grouping related to digital philanthropy practices, resulting in data that were classified according to the research themes. The data were then presented in a form that facilitated the researcher's understanding of the relationships between the data and the meanings contained within the collected data. Ultimately, the study produced a descriptive account of digital philanthropy practices through TikTok conducted by Sahabat Peduli Orphanage in Deli Serdang Regency.

Sobat Peduli Orphanage, located in Deli Serdang Regency, was selected as the research location because of its active involvement in digital philanthropy practices. This institution is relevant for analysis, particularly in relation to the use of religious identity in communication strategies and online donation fundraising. The subjects were selected based on several considerations, such as their level of involvement, experience in managing digital philanthropy practices, and knowledge relevant to producing data in accordance with the objectives of the study. Therefore, the data obtained are expected to provide an overview of digital practices and strategies, as well as the use of religious identity in building participation, trust, and support for philanthropic activities conducted by Sobat Peduli Orphanage.

3. Result and Discussion

Result

Digital Philanthropic Practices through TikTok oleh Rumah Yatim Sobat Peduli Anak Indonesia

Rumah Yatim Sobat Peduli Anak Indonesia is one of the social institutions that provides protection and care through education and character development accompanied by spiritual values for children under its care. The institution takes care of children who experience difficult living conditions, do not receive affection from their parents, have no parents, or are abandoned without a family. The guidance provided by the institution's administrators to the children is based on Christian religious values, which are manifested as a form of love for others and an expression of service to Christ by providing shelter and fulfilling other necessities.

The initial use of TikTok as a digital philanthropy practice by Rumah Yatim Sobat Peduli Anak Indonesia began in January 2026. The use of TikTok was initially motivated by its development as a trend and its widespread use by the public as a medium for sharing information and building interaction. The owner of the Rumah Yatim account also had experience as a content creator and was relatively well known among users in Nias. This became the initial basis for using TikTok as a platform for philanthropic activities. In the early stages of managing the TikTok account of Rumah Yatim Sobat Peduli Anak Indonesia, the account had not yet received significant attention from viewers. Although the account's condition was still not optimal and many people were still unfamiliar with the foundation, the owner of the orphanage remained consistent in using the TikTok platform to raise donations. As a result, in May, the TikTok account experienced a drastic increase in both views and followers. The amount of donations also began to increase.

The growth of the TikTok account of Rumah Yatim Sobat Peduli Anak Indonesia did not occur immediately but was achieved through consistent content management. The administrator explained that videos were uploaded regularly at three fixed times, namely in the morning, afternoon, and evening. In addition, live streaming activities were conducted every day to maintain interaction with viewers and expand the reach of the TikTok account so that it could become more widely known. Furthermore, based on observations of the TikTok account of Rumah Yatim Sobat Peduli Anak Indonesia, the content displayed the daily activities of the children at the foundation. The content included group study activities led directly by the owner of the orphanage, prayers before and after meals, the process of distributing assistance or donated funds to beneficiaries, and activities involving the children singing Christian worship songs together.

Another feature used by the administrators of the Rumah Yatim account is the direct message feature. This feature is utilized to maintain communication and provide direct information to donors regarding donation procedures. The administrators provide complete and easy-to-understand information. Donors can make donations by transferring funds through mobile banking or by using a barcode uploaded daily to the account's story by the administrators. The donations received are in the form of cash, food and beverages, and other necessities such as school supplies. Afterward, the process of distributing donations to the children is documented in the form of videos, which are then edited by the administrators and uploaded as a form of appreciation and a report to donors and viewers. This finding is consistent with the results of an interview with one of the administrators of the orphanage, Novi.

"The viewers always send us direct messages on TikTok. Usually, they ask about donations, and we explain that they can donate through the barcode shared in the story or through the bank account displayed in the bio. Once the donation has been received, we withdraw the money and distribute it directly to our children. We also provide the video privately and upload it as proof that the funds have been given to them." (June 27, 2026)

Donation collection can also be carried out through the live streaming feature by receiving gifts that can later be converted into cash. The interview results indicate that the foundation's account conducts live streaming consistently as a form of interaction and approach toward viewers, encouraging viewers to provide support through the gift feature. The gifts received are subsequently processed into cash and given to the children as pocket money or to fulfill their school-related needs. As evidence for viewers and donors, the administrators routinely document the donations that have been distributed to the beneficiaries in the form of videos. These videos are then uploaded to the TikTok account so that the public can directly observe how the donated funds have been distributed.

Religioun Identity in Digital Philanthropic Practices

The next research finding concerns the religious identity displayed by Rumah Yatim, which includes singing Christian worship songs together, delivering prayers and praises to God, and using Bible verses to convey messages to viewers. The religious identity displayed in digital philanthropic practices aims to demonstrate that the children under the institution's care are continuously taught religious values. It also serves as a basis for communication between the administrators and viewers through TikTok.

The short video uploads on the TikTok account of Rumah Yatim Sobat Peduli Anak Indonesia also display a Christian religious identity. These include singing worship songs commonly performed in places of worship, particularly churches, displaying collective prayers led by the children under the institution's care, and presenting meaningful Bible verses that encourage people to always remember God. The religious identity displayed receives positive responses from viewers, as shown through the comment section. The religious identity used is not merely a concept for the uploaded content but also represents religious values that have been instilled in the children under the institution's care in their daily lives. This statement is consistent with the explanation provided by Novi:

"The content that we show, whether it contains worship songs or live streams where we also have the habit of singing worship songs every day, is not merely for content purposes. This is indeed the daily life of the children at the orphanage, such as the prayers that we always offer and worship at church, which we do together every Sunday. These are activities that we genuinely carry out every day." (July 7, 2026)

The use of religious identity by Rumah Yatim Sobat Peduli Anak Indonesia in its digital philanthropic practices constitutes an integrated part of its efforts to collect donations. The religious identity displayed serves as a value and norm in philanthropic activities to maintain trust and establish broader relationships with donors. The values of love and concern demonstrated by viewers encourage Rumah Yatim Sobat Peduli Anak Indonesia to continue using the TikTok platform to collect donations and fulfill the needs of the children under its care.

Transparency in Fund Management and Interaction in Digital Philanthropic Practices

Rumah Yatim Sobat Peduli Anak Indonesia also demonstrates transparency by displaying documentation through uploaded photos and short videos. The administrators upload videos every day showing the activities of the children under their care as they benefit from the funds collected through donations. The photos display the results of cash donations transferred by donors either through mobile banking or by using the barcode provided in the story of the Rumah Yatim account. Meanwhile, the videos contain information and serve as a form of accountability from the administrators to the donors. The uploaded videos also demonstrate the administrators' consistency in managing the Rumah Yatim Sobat Peduli Anak Indonesia account so that it remains active and becomes known to more TikTok users. The continuous documentation helps maintain donors' trust in the foundation.

These findings are consistent with the statement made by Pipit, a donor to Rumah Yatim Sobat Peduli Anak Indonesia:

> “The owner of the orphanage is very good at communicating with me. For example, when I made my first donation, they immediately provided evidence in the form of photos and videos showing the results of the donation I gave to the children at the orphanage. They usually contact me through DM, and afterward, they upload the results of my donation on TikTok.” (July 7, 2026)

The transparency demonstrated by Rumah Yatim Sobat Peduli Anak Indonesia establishes interaction and creates broader communication through the TikTok platform, thereby fostering good relationships in the continuation of digital philanthropic practices. Through this interaction, the institution can establish cooperation with donors, while donors can obtain information about the activities of the Rumah Yatim, the distribution of donated funds, and the children under its care. Such transparency creates trust in the foundation and enables donors to receive updates regarding the children. Maintaining good communication can build trust and sustain the relationship between the institution and its donors.

The interaction between Rumah Yatim and donors is established through direct messages (DMs). This interaction takes place through TikTok and WhatsApp. Donors acknowledge that these features and the communication established through them are useful for obtaining information about how to make donations and how the donated funds are distributed. Through WhatsApp, donors engage in more intensive communication by asking about the activities of the children at the orphanage, as well as their education and health.

Discussion

Formation of Social Capital in Digital Philanthropic Practices

The digital philanthropic practices carried out by Rumah Yatim Sobat Peduli Anak Indonesia apply values and norms to every piece of content and activity based on Christian teachings. These include video uploads showing the activities of the children under the institution's care, such as singing Christian worship songs, attending church services every Sunday, praying together before and after meals, and continuously offering praise and gratitude to God Almighty. These values and norms serve as the main foundation for the foundation in managing and implementing its digital philanthropic activities. With rules and principles that are believed in and are in accordance with Christian teachings, every process undertaken consistently applies responsibility, honesty, and concern for others, thereby strengthening social relationships and maintaining broad social networks in the fundraising process.

In Christian philanthropy, sharing is a form of love and compassion toward others and a form of service to God. Rumah Yatim Sobat Peduli Anak Indonesia conducts fundraising based on values of love and compassion toward children who are in need and do not receive adequate care from the surrounding community. The religious identity displayed is not merely a concept reflected in the video content presented but also serves as a means of conveying the values of love, solidarity, and service. Both the donors who voluntarily participate in fundraising activities and Rumah Yatim Sobat Peduli Anak Indonesia, which responsibly cares for and protects the children, demonstrate attitudes that arise from Christian religious motivation to serve people in need.

The religious values and norms applied can form broad social networks. Similarities in the values and norms held by individuals can encourage them to establish relationships, resulting in cooperation and community involvement in achieving common goals. Social networks are formed through the TikTok platform, where live streaming activities, video uploads, direct messages, and comment sections serve as spaces for continuous communication. The values and norms displayed and applied can also attract viewers and motivate members of the community to become directly involved in the fundraising process.

The social networks that are formed can subsequently develop into trust between donors and the Rumah Yatim. The foundation consistently demonstrates openness and honesty through its TikTok account by showing the results of donations and their distribution to the children under its care, which can foster donors' trust. Donors also regularly interact with the foundation by asking about the condition and needs of the children. This demonstrates that the trust shown by donors has developed into sustainable social relationships. Trust has become a form of social capital that strengthens cooperation between Rumah Yatim Sobat Peduli Anak Indonesia and its donors, enabling its digital philanthropic practices to continue receiving support.

The findings of this analysis are consistent with previous research by Zhang et al. (2022), which found that trust is a key factor influencing online donation behavior. Trust resulting from financial transparency has a positive impact on users' donation behavior in online charitable giving. Similarly, the findings of this study indicate that the trust established by Rumah Yatim is supported by the openness of information regarding donation results and the distribution of funds to the children under its care. Trust is also developed through documentation in the form of videos, live streams, and other information concerning assistance, thereby encouraging donors' intentions to become more involved in digital philanthropic practices. However, this study also focuses on the formation of interactions, which have a positive impact by creating donors' trust in Rumah Yatim Sobat Peduli Anak Indonesia. The trust that has emerged becomes part of social capital that establishes cooperation and expands the network between Rumah Yatim Sobat Peduli Anak Indonesia and its donors.

Thus, social capital theory, which consists of values and norms, social networks, and trust, can support the implementation of digital philanthropic practices carried out by Rumah Yatim Sobat Peduli Anak Indonesia. Values and norms that are consistent with humanitarian principles and Christian teachings can establish social networks, thereby expanding the foundation's reach in attracting viewers and donors. These social networks can subsequently create continuous interaction, resulting in donors' trust and support for the digital philanthropic practices carried out by Rumah Yatim Sobat Peduli Anak Indonesia, both in terms of moral and material support.

Formation of Interactions in Digital Philanthropic Practices through TikTok

The research findings show that the forms of interaction established between Rumah Yatim Sobat Peduli Anak Indonesia and donors take place through the TikTok platform. The interactions include the delivery of reports on the distribution of donations, responses to comments and questions from donors, and, most frequently, interactions during live streaming activities. This interaction can also be referred to as two-way communication, in which viewers provide responses through the comment section and ask questions that are then answered directly by the administrators.

The interactions established can also be referred to as social networks. Putnam views social networks as relationships that connect individuals and enable them to cooperate in achieving common goals. The TikTok platform functions as a space that facilitates interaction between the orphanage and the wider community without being limited by distance and time. Relationships that initially developed merely through watching content on the orphanage's account have now developed into social relationships through live streaming features, comment sections, direct messages, and other video content uploads. Thus, these social networks have a broad reach and provide the orphanage with greater opportunities to obtain social support.

The interactions established also demonstrate the presence of values and norms that develop between the orphanage and its donors. The values displayed are consistent with the basic values of Christian teachings, namely love, care, and solidarity, which reflect positive relationships among people. These values support the content and live broadcasts, thereby encouraging donors to share their love with orphaned children as a form of expressing their faith. These values then develop into social norms that encourage the community to voluntarily

support the philanthropic activities of Rumah Yatim Sobat Peduli Anak Indonesia, allowing these practices to continue sustainably.

In addition, donors consistently make donations to Rumah Yatim Sobat Peduli based on the transparency of fund management. This transparency creates interaction between the orphanage and donors, such as when donors provide monetary donations and the administrators allocate these funds to meet the daily needs of the children at the orphanage. The results of the donations are then documented and uploaded to the TikTok platform, as well as delivered directly through the direct message feature to the donors who provided the donations. This serves as evidence of the administrators' accountability in managing donated funds.

These findings are consistent with the results of research conducted by Shi and Wu (2023), which found that live streaming can establish interaction between donors and organizers of online charitable donations. This interaction is an important factor influencing donors' donation intentions and behavior. The study also states that users can experience interpersonal interaction and feel socially present in the presence of others. Perceived interactivity has a positive effect on users' intentions to participate in online charitable donations through the TikTok platform's live streaming feature. This is consistent with the findings of the present study, which show that live streaming can establish significant interaction between donors and the orphanage. In addition, TikTok provides features such as comment sections, direct messages, and other video uploads, which create social networks and facilitate continuous interaction.

However, there is a difference between the previous study and the present study. The previous study primarily focused on the influence of performance expectancy on donation intentions and the role of social media in increasing the outcomes of online donations. Meanwhile, this study focuses on the process of digital philanthropic practices through Robert D. Putnam's concept of social capital, namely trust, social networks, values, and norms, which enable digital philanthropic practices to be carried out sustainably through TikTok.

4. Conclusion

The findings of this study show that the digital philanthropic practices carried out by Rumah Yatim Sahabat Peduli Anak Indonesia based on Christian teachings through the TikTok platform demonstrate that digital media is not merely a space for entertainment or information dissemination, but can also serve as a space for social action, such as fundraising and donation collection. In addition, the philanthropic practices reflect religious values based on care, solidarity, and service to others as a form of service to God. Religious values are expressed through content featuring collective prayers, Christian worship songs, religious services, and the delivery of Bible verses, which represent the foundation's religious identity and are practiced in everyday life. These values also serve as a moral foundation for sustaining Christian digital philanthropic practices.

The foundation's digital philanthropic practices can be examined from the perspective of Robert D. Putnam's social capital theory. The Christian values applied by the foundation have developed into norms that build social networks through the TikTok platform. These networks are formed and developed through various features, such as video uploads, live streaming, comment sections, and direct messages. Subsequently, these social networks develop and foster trust among donors, encouraging them to participate in the fundraising process. This trust also emerges from the foundation's transparency, honesty, and openness in managing the orphanage and caring for the children under its care.

Furthermore, fundraising activities create interactions between Rumah Yatim Sahabat Peduli Anak Indonesia and donors through the TikTok platform. Philanthropic practices function not only as a means of fundraising but also as activities for building social relationships based on Christian philanthropic values. These interactions are established through direct messages, comment sections, and live streaming. The interactions that develop foster values of love, care,

and responsibility, which are manifested in concrete actions through donors' continued voluntary involvement and support for the foundation.

Therefore, the findings of this study demonstrate that the success of digital philanthropic practices in fundraising is not solely dependent on the utilization of technology, but also on the social capital built upon Christian values. Openness and transparency contribute to the development of extensive social networks and sustained trust, thereby creating continuous social relationships and expanding community participation in digital philanthropic practices.

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