From Hashtag to Street Action: Applying SIMCA to the #IndonesiaGelap Movement in Samarinda

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Abstrak

This study examines #IndonesiaGelap as a digitally mediated new social movement through which Indonesians expressed dissatisfaction with contested government policies, focusing on mobilization in Samarinda. It aims to explain how affective expressions and moral evaluations circulating online contributed to collective identity formation and the translation of online resonance into offline collective action. Using a qualitative case-study design, data were drawn from in-depth interviews with movement participants, participatory observation, social media content (X and Instagram), and news coverage. Materials were analysed thematically and interpreted through the Social Identity Model of Collective Action (SIMCA), complemented by resource mobilization theory and Alfred Schutz's phenomenological concepts of motive and intersubjectivity. Findings show that perceived injustice created a shared moral frame, while digitally amplified anger, outrage, and hope fostered solidarity and an inclusive coalition identity across student organizations, civil society groups, and unaffiliated citizens. Collective efficacy was enacted through open consolidations and coordinated mobilization of material, human, organizational, and

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symbolic resources, including the hashtag and Garuda imagery. The study concludes that #IndonesiaGelap in Samarinda was not merely a trending hashtag but a meaning-making process in which platformed emotions, identity alignment, and resource coordination jointly enabled offline collective action. The contribution lies in specifying how affective dynamics and morality operate within SIMCA in an Indonesian local context, and in showing how efficacy is organizationally produced. Practically, the results imply that transparent, participatory policymaking and responsive communication may reduce escalation, while movement organizers benefit from inclusive consolidation and clear symbolic strategies.

Keywords
Collective emotions, digital activism, moral framing, resource mobilization, #IndonesiaGelap, SIMCA

Introduction

Social movements are a form of popular resistance through which people express dissatisfaction with prevailing policies and demand collective change (Manulu 2016). While earlier waves of mobilization often foregrounded material interests and class-based demands, contemporary movements increasingly center questions of humanity, injustice, political accountability, environmental protection, and gender equality (Nofrima and Qodir 2021). By endorsing, rejecting, or campaigning for particular forms of social change (Purboningsih 2015), participants cultivate shared awareness and coordinate action through collective practices that bind individuals into a common cause (Akbar 2016).

Over the past four decades, the infrastructures of mobilization have expanded from legacy media (newspapers and television) to digitally networked platforms that enable rapid circulation of information and coordination across distance (Apriyani 2021; Saud et al. 2020). Social media, in particular, has become a widely accessible arena for political discussion (Khatimah et al. 2024), offering a space where grievances can be articulated publicly, protest can be organized quickly, and solidarity can be forged among dispersed participants (Ardian et al. 2024). These affordances do not simply "broadcast" dissent; they shape how collective action emerges, scales, and sustains itself in real time.

At the micro-level, collective action can be understood as the outcome of identity processes in which personal concerns and self-understandings become aligned with group-based meanings through interaction (Grinspun et al. 2022). Movements convert individual demands and emotions into collective claims by mobilizing resources, symbols, and creativity to act upon shared interpretations of injustice (Troost et al. 2020). In digitally mediated contexts, the affective dimension of mobilization becomes particularly visible: emotions such as empathy, grief, and anger can function as catalysts for solidarity when communicated and amplified through online networks. Social media provides a space where emotions are aggregated, circulated, and intensified, accelerating affective resonance and supporting the emergence of collective consciousness (Sinaga and Putra 2021). Importantly, negative emotions, such as fear and anxiety, do not only demobilize; under certain conditions they can contribute to a stronger sense of collectivity that becomes a driving force for action (Zabala et al. 2024; Jasper 2019).

In Indonesia, these dynamics are often discussed through the distinction between "old" and "new" social movements. Contemporary mobilization is frequently less anchored in a single, unifying ideology and more oriented toward socio-cultural concerns like identity, dignity, and quality of life within pluralistic and loosely organized participation (Prasisko 2016; Singh in Prasetya 2019). Recent Indonesian studies also underline that moral drive and collective emotions are not peripheral but central to solidarity formation. Funay (2020) emphasizes the role of local cultural values in shaping empathy-based solidarity, while Hekmatyar and Vonika (2021) highlight how resilience in crisis is sustained more by horizontal ties among individuals than by ideological affiliation. Firmansyah et al. (2023) similarly note shifting patterns of solidarity toward moral bonds and social responsibility in responses to inequality. At the same time, the expansion of social media has transformed movement repertoires into short, symbolic, and viral forms, especially hashtags and visual campaigns, through which grievances are framed and participation is invited (Sulaiman 2024; Kusniawati and Sihabuddin 2023).

However, the rapid growth of digital mobilization research also leaves a key gap. Existing accounts often explain online movements either through structural features of platforms (virality, reach, network effects) or through broad labels such as "new social movements," without sufficiently

theorizing how affective processes, such as moral emotions, group-based feelings, and solidarity, become translated into sustained collective action across online and offline arenas in specific Indonesian settings. In other words, we know that hashtags can spread and that moral emotions matter, but we still need clearer explanations of how digitally circulated emotions interact with identity formation to produce coordinated action, particularly beyond major national centres and within local contexts where participation, risk, and social ties may look different.

This study addresses that gap through the case of the Indonesia Gelap movement, which emerged in early 2025 in response to government policies perceived by segments of the public as unjust. The movement developed through the viral circulation of the hashtag #IndonesiaGelap on social media, generating solidarity across regions. As a social-media-based movement, #IndonesiaGelap reached a notable peak on 17 February 2025, coinciding with mass actions in multiple locations. Online sentiments within this period criticized a range of government policies, from budget efficiency measures to policies viewed as insufficiently grounded in in-depth research (Fahmi 2025). Focusing on a case study in Samarinda, this article investigates not only what was mobilized and when, but also the affective and identity mechanisms through which digital discourse contributed to collective action.

Accordingly, the research problem guiding this article is: how did affective expressions and moral evaluations communicated through #IndonesiaGelap contribute to the formation of collective identity and the mobilization of collective action in Samarinda? The study has three objectives: (1) to identify the dominant emotions and moral framings articulated in #IndonesiaGelap discourse; (2) to analyse how these affective expressions contribute to solidarity and group identification among participants; and (3) to examine how social media repertoires (hashtags, symbolic visuals, and viral narratives) facilitate the translation of online resonance into offline mobilization in the local context.

The contribution of this study is twofold. Empirically, it provides a grounded account of #IndonesiaGelap as a contemporary Indonesian movement that links digital dynamics with localized collective action. Theoretically, it advances understanding of contemporary mobilization by centring the affective dimension and situating it within the SIMCA (Social Identity Model of Collective Action) perspective, thereby offering a more

integrated explanation of how identity and emotion jointly shape collective action in digitally mediated movements. Top of Form

Method

This study adopts a qualitative design. Primary data were collected through (1) in-depth interviews with movement participants, (2) participatory observation during relevant activities, (3) documentation of digital activity related to the movement (e.g., posts, hashtags, and visual materials), and (4) media coverage that reported and framed the movement.

Data were analysed using thematic analysis as elaborated by Braun and Clarke (as discussed in Byrne 2022). The analysis proceeded by identifying recurring patterns of meaning across the dataset, particularly symbols, emotional expressions, and narratives that emerged through interactions between individuals and groups in both online and offline settings. The findings are presented descriptively through analytical narratives supported by charts.

Because new social movements such as #IndonesiaGelap are shaped not only by rational considerations but also by collective emotions and social identity dynamics, this study draws on Van Zomeren's Social Identity Model of Collective Action (SIMCA). SIMCA conceptualizes participation in collective action as influenced by five interrelated components: social identity, perceived injustice, group efficacy, group-based emotions, and morality. These five components structure the analysis and guide the interpretation of empirical materials (see Figure 1).

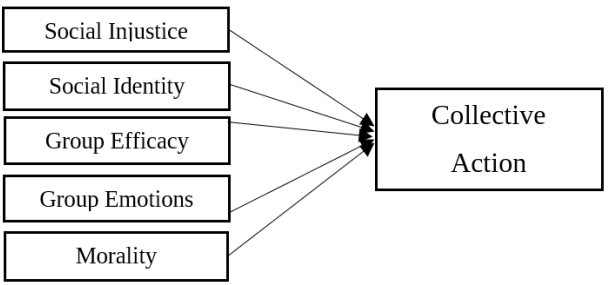

Figure 1. SIMCA Model

Source: Van Zomeren (2018)

Figure 1 summarizes the factors theorized to predict collective action: perceived injustice, social identity, group efficacy, group emotions, and morality. Prior work applying SIMCA in the Indonesian context (Nugraha et al. 2024, for example) highlights the centrality of collective efficacy in motivating supporters to pursue justice and social change. Moral beliefs, often tied to social justice and human rights concerns, can further strengthen individual commitment to participate and remain engaged.

To complement SIMCA, the study also refers to Resource Mobilization Theory (Edwards and McCarthy 2004), particularly to deepen the analysis of collective efficacy. From this perspective, movement outcomes depend not only on identity and emotion, but also on actors' capacity to mobilize, manage, and deploy resources such as material, human, organizational, and symbolic.

Finally, to examine participants' motivations more closely, the analysis is informed by Alfred Schutz's social phenomenology, which distinguishes between *because motives* and *in-order-to motives* and emphasizes intersubjectivity and typification in the production of shared meanings that underlie participation in collective action (Deep 2020). Together, these frameworks enable a multi-level explanation of #IndonesiaGelap that links identity and emotion, resource coordination, and subjective meaning-making.

Results

The dynamics of the #IndonesiaGelap movement in Samarinda were examined using the Social Identity Model of Collective Action (SIMCA), complemented by resource mobilization and phenomenological perspectives. Drawing on interviews, participatory observations, and social media materials, the findings indicate that mass participation was driven not only by opposition to state policies, but also by affective bonds cultivated through digital interaction. Social media functioned as a key infrastructure for mobilization: it aggregated and amplified emotions, circulated symbols of resistance, and disseminated shared narratives that strengthened group identity and solidarity across diverse social backgrounds.

Social Injustice

Social justice is a principle that ensures rights and opportunities are distributed evenly within the structure of society, particularly in response to policies that are considered unfair and lacking in transparency. This view reflects the existence of structural inequality, which becomes a shared moral reason for taking action.

A concrete example of the perception of social injustice can be seen in the emergence of the #IndonesiaGelap movement in Samarinda. The #IndonesiaGelap movement began with public unrest over a number of government policies that were considered controversial and not in the interests of the people. These policies sparked anger and disappointment, especially among students and civil society.

This unrest spread massively on social media, especially on X, under the hashtag #IndonesiaGelap and the visual symbol of a black Garuda bird. The use of the hashtag on the social media platform X increased in a short period of time (see Figure 2).

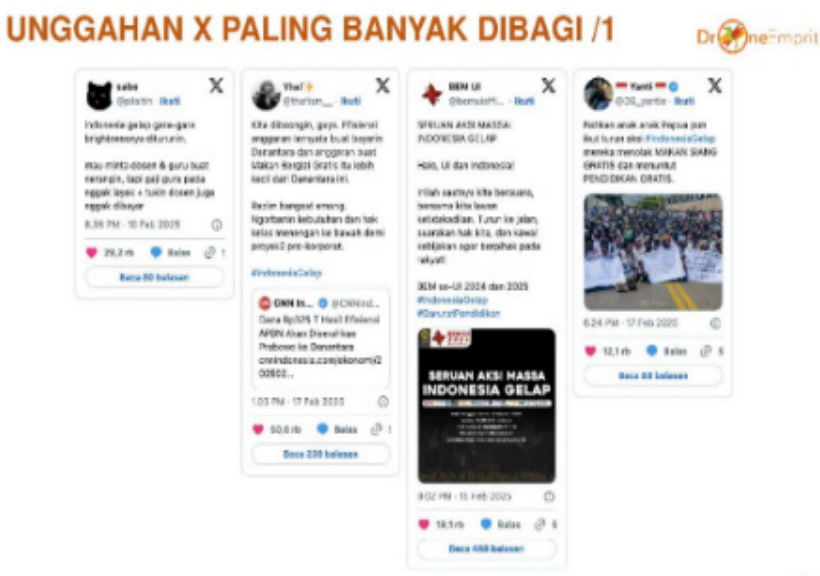

Figure 2. Hashtag Trend #IndonesiaGelap from 16-17 February 2025

Source: Drone Emprit Analysis (2025)

The X platform itself supports this dissemination process through pinned tweets and trend descriptions, making it easier for users to find trending topics. Through Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis, these posts represent three main themes: structural injustice, threats to the future of generations, and collective anger. The Indonesia Gelap movement voices aspirations formulated jointly by various elements of society, such as university student organizations, environmental advocacy groups, and various civil society alliances. The root of these demands is collective experience.

The demands were compiled through a series of discussions and open consolidation forums, both before and during two major waves of action: Indonesia Gelap Volume I in February 2025 and Volume II in March 2025. This graphic visualizes how the demands were structured and distributed by various participants in the movement, from national to local issues. Figure 3 reveals issues raised in the Indonesia Gelap social movement in Samarinda.

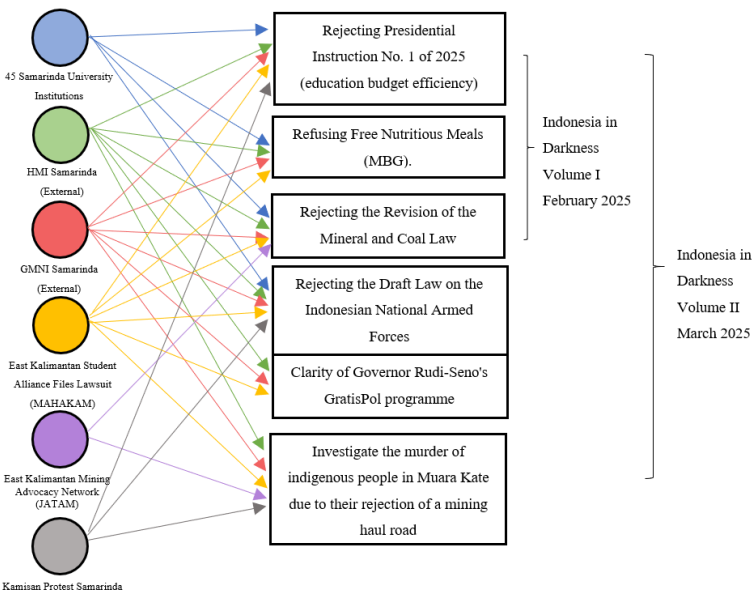

Figure 3. Demands of the Indonesian Dark Social Movement in Samarinda

Source: The authors (2025)

As seen in Figure 3, the Indonesia Gelap social movement in Samarinda is divided into two parts, namely Indonesia Gelap volume 1 in February and Indonesia Gelap volume 2 in March 2025. The demands brought up in volume 1 in Samarinda are national demands that are brought up simultaneously in various cities in Indonesia. According to an interview with Jamil, a member of GMNI Samarinda, regional movements will follow national movements, with the center in Jakarta, Indonesia: "Regional actions will follow if national actions have already begun. Simultaneous actions throughout Indonesia are usually scheduled for Wednesdays and Thursdays" Nur, Jamil. (2025). Samarinda, June, 2025.

The demands brought up nationally in February in the Indonesian Dark Social Movement were to reject Presidential Instruction No. 1 of 2025 (on education budget efficiency), reject Free Nutritious Meals (MBG), and reject the revision of the Mineral and Coal Law. After that, the Indonesian Dark Social Movement continued nationally in March, with the addition of demands to reject the draft law on the Indonesian National Armed Forces. The Indonesian Dark Social Movement was local, particularly in Samarinda. This wave of social movement was classified as volume 1. In volume 1, the demands brought by the Indonesian Dark Social Movement in Samarinda followed those brought by the Indonesian Dark Social Movement nationally. After that, in volume 2, the Indonesian Dark social movement in Samarinda added demands, but on a local scale, namely clarity on the free program of Governor Rudi-Seno and an investigation into the killing of indigenous people in Muara Kate due to their rejection of the mining hauling route.

On the reasons behind the Samarinda social movement, two types of motives appears. The first reason is rooted in past experiences that shape current attitudes and reactions. The other is a dream or hope for the future In this case, Jamil, a member of GMNI Samarinda, personally stated:

> Inspired by our founding fathers, especially from Soekarno's book, which is the voice of the people, which opposes everything related to injustice, this is also in line with GMNI, we adopt Marhaenism. Action is not just taking to the streets, but we fight for everything that should be the rights of the Indonesian people.

The meaning of social action is also born through intersubjectivity, which is the process of mutual understanding and agreement on shared experiences in social interactions, both in person and through social media.

The agreement on the six main demands shows a common understanding of the fundamental issues that are considered important. For example, DPM KM Unmul in promoting the issues raised by the East Kalimantan Mining Advocacy Network (JATAM):

> The issue of mining, which is specifically experienced by the people of Muara Kate, was also brought up to demand justice in the Indonesia Gelap movement in Samarinda. This was agreed upon during the pre-action consolidation.

The #IndonesiaGelap movement is a joint action that took place simultaneously in a number of regions in Indonesia as a reaction to government policies that were considered unfair. Looking further into the dynamics of the #IndonesiaGelap movement in Samarinda, which was one of the cities coordinating the action, both online and offline. Table 1 shows the call to action in Samarinda on the Instagram social media platform.

Table 1. Overall Analysis of #IndonesiaGelap Action Calls in Samarinda via Instagram Social Account

No.	Date. Action Name, and Account	Visual Symbol	Source
1.	17 February 2025. “Seruan Aksi Aliansi Mahakam Jilid II. Indonesia Gelap Darurat Pendidikan”. @Samarinda_Melawan	Burned Tire, Black and Red Color	https://www.instagram.com/p/DGIdeRPSc-7B/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRlODBiNWFlZA==
2.	17 February 2025. “Seruan Aksi Kepada Seluruh Mahasiswa Unmul. Indonesia Gelap Darurat Pendidikan”. @bemkm_unmul.	Black Color	https://www.instagram.com/p/DGIAcl_PAUp/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRlODBiNWFlZA==

Table 1. (Continued)

3.	24 February 2025. "Peringatan Darurat. Seruan Aksi Indonesia Gelap" @gmni.samarinda	Garuda Bird with Black Background	https://www.instagram.com/p/DGazGr2S-NoY/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRlODBiNWFlZA==
4.	24 February 2025. "Seruan Aksi! Aliansi Mahakam Jilid II. Indonesia Gelap Cuti Bersama Peringatan Darurat!" @samarinda_melawan	Black Color	https://www.instagram.com/p/DGa2N-QnSQ5H/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRlODBiNWFlZA==
5.	27 Februari 2025. "Terus Bergerak, Rawat Api #IndonesiaGelap" @aksikamisankaltim	Clenched Fist, Fire, Black and Red Colors	https://www.instagram.com/p/DGjs58wvA-tR/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRlODBiNWFlZA==
6.	6 Maret 2025. "Perempuan Mengorganisir Perlaawanan #IndonesiaGelap" @aksikamisankaltim	Woman Raising Her Fist, Red Color	https://www.instagram.com/p/DGxbmGPPN9d/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRlODBiNWFlZA==

Table 1. (Continued)

7.	8 Maret 2025. "Perempuan Merawat Api Perlawanan #IndonesiaGelap" @mahardhikasamarinda	Hand Holding a Phone, Black, Purple, and Red Colors	https://www.instagram.com/p/DG-4sLNevYds/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
8.	21 Maret 2025. "Seruan Aksi! Indonesia Gelap Pukul Mundur Militer ke Barak!" @samarinda_melawan	Military image, Black and Red colors	https://www.instagram.com/p/DHbhzGPT-bgs/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRlODBiNWFlZA==

Source: The authors (2025)

Table 1 reveals three main interrelated patterns. First, the use of visual symbols such as red and black colors, images of fire, the Garuda bird, and narratives such as "emergency warning" and "Dark Indonesia" systematically frame the issue as an emergency and a form of resistance. More specifically, it reflects the collective identity of groups who feel they have experienced injustice. Second, narratives and calls to action published through social media build solidarity across groups, while also stirring collective emotions such as anger, frustration, and hope for change. Third, open calls to action and collaboration between organizations demonstrate a shared belief in collective efficacy, supported by the mobilization of symbolic resources and networks through social media.

Samarinda's participation in this national movement shows how national issues were reinterpreted and made meaningful at the local level. This process unfolded through interactions among student organizations, community groups, and local leaders.

Social Identity

Social identity refers to a person's awareness of being a member of a group that shares similar experiences, values, and goals. The manifestation of this

indicator is the formation of collective consciousness in the #IndonesiaGelap movement, which began in the digital space through social media and developed into real action in various regions. In Samarinda, the expansion of the movement's space was evident through the involvement of students and civil society who actively organized street actions, confirming that social identity plays an important role in mobilizing participation at the local level. Figure 4 shows the flow of the expansion of the movement's space at the local level, particularly in Samarinda.

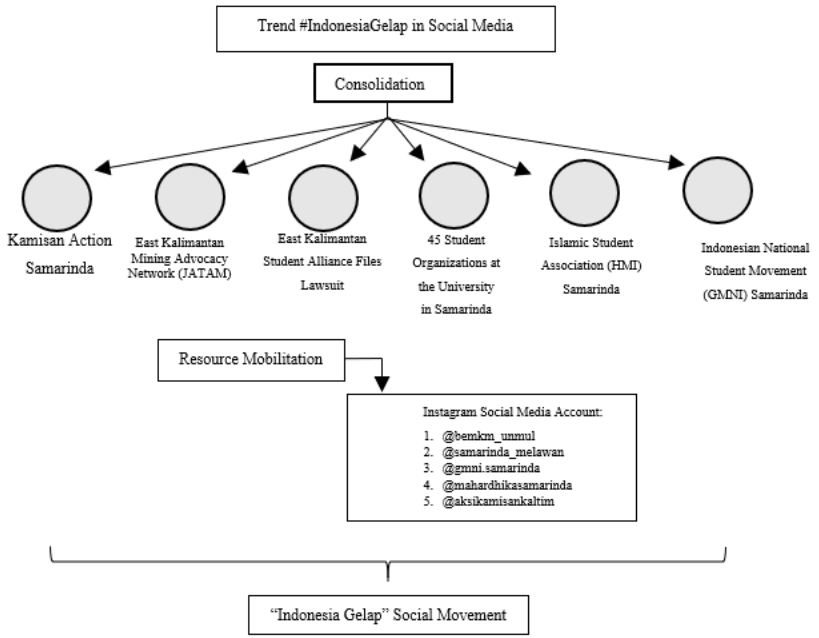

Figure 4. Indonesia Gelap Social Movement in Samarinda

Source: The authors (2025)

As shown in Figure 4, the #IndonesiaGelap movement in Samarinda began in digital spaces and later expanded into collective action in public arenas. Data for this section were drawn from interviews with members of student organizations involved in the 2025 movement, including the Indonesian National Student Movement (GMNI) Samarinda, the Islamic Student Association (HMI) Samarinda, BEM KM Unmul, and DPM KM Unmul.

The movement initially gained momentum through the emergence and rapid circulation of the hashtag #IndonesiaGelap across social media platforms. This online virality encouraged student organizations to initiate broader outreach and to convene open consolidations with other groups. These included external student and youth networks such as GMNI Samarinda, HMI Samarinda, and the East Kalimantan Student Alliance (MAHAKAM), as well as civil society organizations such as Aksi Kamisan Samarinda and the East Kalimantan Mining Advocacy Network (JATAM).

Consolidation was described by Suarga (2025), Chair of DPM KM, as a necessary precondition for collective action: "We will open consolidation; for this action movement the consolidation is general in nature. That is where the demands from various elements will be discussed." In these early stages, resource mobilization took shape through negotiations over shared ideals, demands, and common goals. Agreement on a collective platform enabled participants to move together as a diverse coalition while also expanding the mobilization by recruiting additional supporters.

In parallel, digital outreach functioned as a mechanism for mass recruitment. Agung (2025) from HMI Samarinda explained that calls for action were circulated online: "Propaganda was disseminated on social media, on Instagram. Posters inviting people to join and the date of the action were also included in the posts."

From the perspective of symbolic interaction, these dynamics indicate that movement meanings were produced through intense, intersubjective communication. Accounts such as @bemkm_unmul, @samarinda_melawan, @gmni.samarinda, @mahardhikasamarinda, and @aksikamisankaltim were central to articulating symbols, shared language, and collective objectives. In this way, social action acquired coherence through the ongoing construction of meaning in symbolic and communicative interaction (Carter and Fuller 2016).

Group Efficacy

The manifestation of group efficacy indicators is seen when participants begin to believe that their involvement can drive real social change. This collective efficacy is realized through efforts to manage resources, strengthen networks, and coordinate actions involving various elements

of civil society. The following discussion explains how movement actors strategically organized support to sustain the mobilization.

Figure 5 illustrates patterns of resource mobilization in the #IndonesiaGelap movement in Samarinda. In material terms, logistical needs, such as banners, sound systems, flags, and basic medical supplies, were collected independently through internal contributions. In terms of human resources, students from various faculties participated and were mobilized for different roles. Organizationally, cooperation among campus bodies and allied groups (BEM Unmul, BEM KM faculties, DPM KM Unmul, GMNI Samarinda, HMI Samarinda, the MAHAKAM alliance, Aksi Kamisan, and JATAM) was consolidated into a coordinated collective effort. Symbolically, movement actors produced visual propaganda, including a black eagle emblem and red-and-black posters, which circulated widely on social media. As the chart indicates, campus organizations worked to maximize these resource indicators to broaden participation in the demonstration. Suarga, Chair of DPM KM Unmul, described this coordination process: “Every organizational institution collects contributions before taking action. We work together and coordinate during open consolidation with every element of society and alliance present.”

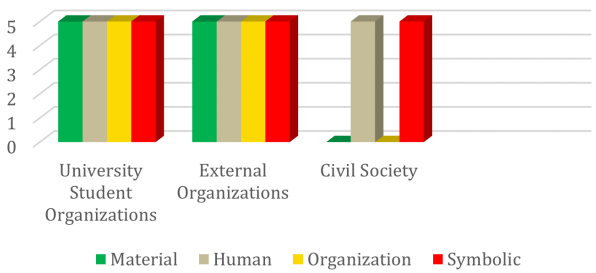

Figure 5. Mobilization of Resources for the Indonesian Social Movement in Samarinda

Source: The authors (2025)

Organizations beyond the campus also supported mobilization by using social media to distribute information and invite public participation. GMNI Samarinda, for example, described a sequence of tactics that combined political education and digital outreach:

> Initially, we held open discussions to raise public awareness about the current conditions in Indonesia, as a form of education. This was followed by consolidation and dissemination of posts on social media, such as Instagram, using the hashtag #IndonesiaGelap (Dark Indonesia), which encompassed all demands. After that, we will move regionally.

In contrast to student organizations and alliances, which tend to be more structured and better supported logistically, civilian participation in Samarinda relied more heavily on symbolic power and interpersonal networks operating across both digital and physical spaces. Many civilians did not join as members of formal organizations; instead, they contributed through personal awareness, online engagement, and concern over public issues. Nadila, a private-sector employee who joined the action, explained: "It all started with the hashtag #IndonesiaGelap and calls for action on Instagram, which were also exposed on social media X. In this era, all information in our country spreads quickly on social media."

Overall, the #IndonesiaGelap action in Samarinda was able to mobilize resources effectively due to cooperation across multiple actors. Campus organizations played a central role in managing logistics, coordinating participants, and developing action strategies. External groups contributed by raising awareness through public discussions and online campaigns. Civil society support was also consequential, as many individuals were motivated by empathy and by information encountered online. The effective use of the four key dimensions of resource mobilization such as material resources, human resources, organizational coordination, and symbolic production helped sustain participation and demonstrates how movement strength depends on coordination as well as broad, active engagement in collective action.

Group Emotions

The manifestation of Group Emotions indicator in the Samarinda movement occurs in the digital realm. Drone Emprit's analysis shows that there is

a dominance of expressions of anger, disappointment, and fear in online interactions (Fahmi 2025). This shows that shared emotions play a crucial role in encouraging participation, even before there is formal consolidation in the field.

As shown in Figure 6, public emotions were dominated by anger directed at policies perceived to harm ordinary people. Alongside this, expressions of happiness appeared as signals of support for the protest, and many posts conveyed anticipation that the action would produce positive change (Fahmi 2025). This emotional landscape suggests that anger and moral outrage, which are rooted in perceptions of injustice, helped strengthen solidarity and deepen participants' commitment to collective action. In turn, the circulation and amplification of individual and group emotions in digital space contributed to the rapid expansion of a massive and far-reaching new social movement.

Figure 6. Analysis of User Emotions on Social Media

Source: Drone Emprit Analysis (2025)

Morality

The #IndonesiaGelap movement in Samarinda reflects an important shift in the character of contemporary collective action. From the perspective of the Social Identity Model of Collective Action (SIMCA), participation in this movement was shaped not only by awareness of structural injustice, but also by the interplay of social identity, collective efficacy, and group-based emotions, all of which were infused with moral evaluations and responsibilities.

Rehan (2025), a staff member of BEM KM Unmul, emphasized that student participation has moved beyond passive involvement toward moral and social consciousness. He said:

> Individuals who are curious about the current condition of Indonesia will ultimately always pay attention to news developments and actively seek out information about current issues. Returning to the context of action, participant involvement is not only due to curiosity, but also due to a moral drive that comes from within each individual. We take to the streets as the voice of the people.

This account illustrates a transition from curiosity as an initial trigger to moral responsibility as a sustaining motivation. Similarly, Agung (2025) from the Samarinda Islamic Student Association (HMI) explained how religiously inflected moral commitments, embedded within a shared group identity, also informed participation. He said:

> We took action because of the moral awareness of each individual. For our demands, we conveyed our common concerns. This has also been discussed beforehand in the consolidation, regarding common demands and goals. No one stood out during the action; everyone was united. As for the basis for taking action, if we are from HMI, what is felt by Muslims as a whole is the most important thing for us. That is why we support this action.

Rather than pointing to a single, homogeneous identity, this statement suggests that collective identity in the movement was inclusive and layered, drawing legitimacy from diverse moral frameworks while converging around common demands. The importance of collective emotional resonance was also highlighted in field coordination. Hiththan (2025), Field General of the Indonesia Gelap Samarinda action, described the need to read and manage crowd emotions strategically:

> Is this social movement triggered by our shared Pancasila ideology or not? I prefer to say that they are driven by their own idealism. I also feel the rhythm in the field, feel the surge of emotion among the crowd. I have to be able to understand the dynamics of the mass action and adjust the tempo, in accordance with my duty to ensure the smooth running of the action in order to achieve the common goals that have been determined in the previous open consolidation.

His account underscores that emotions were not incidental but central to mobilization, requiring deliberate coordination to maintain unity and keep the action aligned with collectively agreed goals. Suarga (2025), Chair of the Unmul Student Executive Board, similarly emphasized the heterogeneity of the crowd and noted that moral motivations can be an effective resource for mobilization:

> This action is not being hijacked by any particular party, because the masses consist of various elements of society with various aspirations being voiced. Of course, with varying moral motivations. After all, the action requires massive resources.

Civilian participation further demonstrates how digitally mediated information and lived vulnerability intersect. Nadila (2025), a private-sector employee who joined the demonstration, described how online exposure to the movement shaped her decision while workplace risks shaped her tactics:

> I am just an ordinary working woman in a company. I took to the streets during the Indonesia Gelap protests. I am also someone who is always online. I deliberately asked for a day off at that time. Regarding clothing, I chose black because we are in mourning, for our Indonesia. In addition, workers like us cannot be detected participating in protests. We wear face mask and hats. Because it can be dangerous for our jobs, and there is also a risk of arrest.

Nadila (2025) also connected her participation to the ways government policy permeates everyday life, linking perceived injustice to concrete experiences and growing pressure:

> Whether civil society is affected or not, why should we join the protests? Indonesia Gelap actually originated from an emergency warning, right? It started with a shortage of LPG gas. And now? Mining, revisions to the Minerba Law, and the existence of dual functions. Access to medicines is also increasingly difficult because it turns out that some drug budgets have been cut and their use is focused on hospitals. Everything we do in life is the result of policy. All of that is related to politics. Currently, without us realizing it, we are increasingly suffocating. There is a need for awareness to make changes to this condition.

Taken together, these accounts indicate that #IndonesiaGelap in Samarinda cannot be reduced to a trending hashtag. Rather, it represents the convergence of perceived injustice, collective identity formation, group efficacy, and emotionally charged moral evaluations, dynamics that collectively motivated participation and sustained mobilization in both digital and physical arenas.

Discussion

This study set out to explain how affective expressions and moral evaluations circulating through #IndonesiaGelap contributed to collective identity formation and mobilization in Samarinda. Synthesizing interview accounts, observations, and social media materials, the findings show that participation was driven not only by opposition to perceived policy injustices, but also by the affective infrastructures of digital platforms that aggregated emotions, circulated symbols, and enabled cross-group solidarity. Interpreted through SIMCA and complemented by resource mobilization and phenomenological perspectives, the Samarinda case highlights how perceived injustice, identity alignment, collective efficacy, and group emotions mutually reinforce one another, while morality provides a powerful justificatory frame that sustains engagement across diverse participants.

Comparing the findings with previous studies, the Samarinda case supports prior work that frames social movements as collective resistance aimed at policy change (Manulu 2016) and as increasingly centred on justice, political accountability, and broader humanitarian concerns rather than narrowly material demands (Nofrima and Qodir 2021). Participants' narratives and the movement's demands, spanning education budgets, extractive industry governance, and militarization, illustrate how grievances are articulated as moral claims about rights, fairness, and the future of generations, consistent with research emphasizing the normative orientation of contemporary mobilization (Firmansyah et al. 2023).

The findings align with scholarship on the expanding infrastructures of mobilization from legacy media to digitally networked platforms (Apriyani 2021; Saud et al. 2020). In Samarinda, social media did more than disseminate information; it served as an organizing environment where calls to action, consolidation announcements, and symbolic resources

like the black Garuda and red–black visual palettes circulated rapidly. This resonates with arguments that social media operates as a democratic arena for participation and political discussion (Khatimah et al. 2024) and supports rapid organization and solidarity among dispersed publics (Ardian et al. 2024). At the same time, the case extends these accounts by detailing *how* digital circulation becomes meaningful locally: national issues were reinterpreted through interactions among student organizations, alliances, and civil society groups, showing the local "translation" work required for national hashtags to become grounded collective action.

The results reinforce identity-based explanations of participation that emphasize the micro-processes through which individuals align personal concerns with group meanings (Grinspun et al. 2022). The movement's open consolidations and cross-organization coordination functioned as sites of identity articulation: actors negotiated shared demands, agreed on common goals, and built a coalition identity that was explicitly inclusive rather than ideologically uniform. This finding is consistent with discussions of "new social movements" in Indonesia, where mobilization is less anchored in a single ideology and more oriented to socio-cultural concerns and pluralistic participation (Prasisko 2016; Singh in Prasetya 2019). However, the Samarinda case also nuances this framework: rather than a complete absence of ideology, participants mobilized multiple moral and value-based repertoires (civic-nationalist commitments, religious moral concerns, environmental justice claims), which converged into a shared platform during consolidation.

The dominance of anger and moral outrage in digital discourse supports affect-centred accounts of mobilization. Prior research has argued that social media aggregates and amplifies emotion, accelerating affective resonance and enabling collective consciousness (Sinaga and Putra 2021). The Samarinda findings are consistent with this view: anger and disappointment were central online, while hope and supportive affect also appeared as anticipatory emotions oriented toward change (Fahmi 2025). This pattern supports the broader argument that negative emotions can become mobilizing forces under particular conditions (Jasper 2019; Zabala et al. 2024). Importantly, the Samarinda case suggests that anger became mobilizing not simply because it was intense, but because it was moralized, which was linked to perceived injustice and framed as an urgent threat to collective futures, thereby strengthening solidarity and commitment.

This study's emphasis on collective efficacy and resource coordination parallels prior SIMCA-informed findings that efficacy is a major motivation for participation in justice-oriented action (Nugraha et al. 2024). The Samarinda case supports this claim while adding specificity: efficacy was enacted through the practical work of mobilizing logistics, coordinating multi-organization participation, and maintaining symbolic coherence. These observations also align with resource mobilization theory, which emphasizes that movement outcomes depend on the capacity to mobilize and manage material, human, organizational, and symbolic resources (Edwards and McCarthy 2004). Rather than treating efficacy as only a psychological belief, the findings show it as organizationally produced through coordination, contributions, and division of labour.

Taken together, the results suggest a reinforcing loop across SIMCA elements. Perceived injustice operated as the primary grievance that moralized policy critique and provided a shared interpretive frame. This frame was sharpened and circulated digitally through hashtags, emergency narratives, and shared symbols, which helped consolidate social identity across organizational boundaries. Open consolidations translated dispersed grievances into a collectively owned set of demands, producing a coalition identity that could accommodate ideological and social diversity.

Within this identity field, group efficacy was not only asserted but operationalized: organizations and alliances coordinated resources, managed logistics, and expanded networks, while social media served as a recruitment and synchronization mechanism. Meanwhile, group emotions, especially anger and outrage, were intensified online and then carried into offline mobilization, where field coordinators managed crowd affect and "tempo" to maintain unity and direction. Morality bridged these elements: it transformed curiosity into responsibility, justified risk-taking, and allowed heterogeneous participants (students, activists, private-sector employees) to see their involvement as legitimate and necessary. In phenomenological terms, participants' motivations combined *because motives* (past experiences, accumulated grievances) and *in-order-to motives* (hopes for change and justice), while shared meanings were produced through intersubjective communication in both digital and face-to-face settings (Deep 2020).

Theoretical and practical implications

This study contributes to the literature in three main theoretical ways. First, it strengthens SIMCA's explanatory power for Indonesian digitally mediated movements by showing that the model's components do not operate independently; they co-produce one another through platformed communication and organizational practice. Second, it demonstrates that resource mobilization is not merely an external supplement to SIMCA, but a mechanism through which collective efficacy becomes credible and actionable. In Samarinda, beliefs about efficacy were reinforced by visible coordination, logistical readiness, and coalition-building, consistent with resource mobilization insights (Edwards and McCarthy 2004). Third, the phenomenological lens clarifies how participation is experienced and justified: emotions and moral evaluations were not just reactions but part of meaning-making processes through which individuals interpreted national issues as personally relevant and locally actionable (Deep 2020). This helps address the research gap identified in the introduction—moving beyond descriptions of virality to explain how affect and identity translate into coordinated action in a specific local setting.

Practically, the findings have implications for both movement organizers and policymakers. For organizers, the Samarinda case highlights the importance of (1) open consolidation as a mechanism for translating dispersed online sentiments into shared demands, (2) symbolic consistency to sustain identity and visibility across platforms, and (3) deliberate affective coordination to maintain unity and reduce fragmentation during street actions. For policymakers and public institutions, the results suggest that large-scale protest is not solely a product of "misinformation" or spontaneous online outrage; it can reflect structured moral critique of perceived injustices and a belief that collective action is necessary when policy processes are seen as opaque or insufficiently evidence-based. Addressing such movements constructively may therefore require improving transparency, public participation, and responsiveness, rather than treating digital mobilization as merely disruptive.

Study limitations

Several limitations should be noted here. First, as a qualitative case study, the findings prioritize depth over breadth and cannot be generalized statistically to all locations where #IndonesiaGelap appeared. Second,

the interview-based evidence relies heavily on participants connected to student organizations and allied groups, which may underrepresent less organized or less visible participants and may shape how motivations and strategies are narrated. Third, social media analysis captures publicly available expressions and platform dynamics, but it cannot fully determine causal direction—whether online emotions drove offline action or were themselves shaped by unfolding events and organizational cues. Fourth, the analysis focuses primarily on the most visible platforms and materials (e.g., Instagram calls to action and X trending dynamics), which may overlook coordination occurring in encrypted or private channels. Finally, the movement unfolded in a specific political moment (February–March 2025) with particular policy controversies; subsequent shifts in political context or platform governance may alter mobilization patterns over time.

Despite these limitations, the Samarinda case provides a grounded explanation of how a nationally circulating hashtag was localized through coalition-building, moral framing, affective resonance, and resource coordination. It shows that #IndonesiaGelap was not simply digital "noise," but a locally meaningful form of collective action produced at the intersection of injustice perceptions, identity processes, emotional dynamics, and organized mobilization.

Conclusion

This study examined how affective expressions and moral evaluations communicated through #IndonesiaGelap contributed to collective identity formation and mobilization in Samarinda, and it pursued three objectives: mapping dominant emotions and moral framings, explaining how these affective expressions strengthened solidarity and identification, and clarifying how social media repertoires facilitated the translation of online resonance into offline action.

First, the analysis shows that anger and moral outrage dominated digital discourse, alongside supportive affect and anticipation of positive change. These emotions were closely tied to perceptions of policy-related injustice and were repeatedly framed through emergency narratives and symbolic visuals, particularly the hashtag and dark imagery associated with "Indonesia Gelap." Second, these affective and moral framings contributed to solidarity and collective identity by providing a shared

interpretive lens through which diverse actors (student organizations, civil society groups, and unaffiliated individuals) recognized common concerns and positioned themselves as part of the same collective. In Samarinda, participation was not homogeneous; it was inclusive and multi-layered, drawing legitimacy from varied moral vocabularies (civic, religious, and social justice commitments) while converging around shared demands. Third, the findings demonstrate that social media repertoires (hashtags, posters, and viral narratives) helped transform online resonance into offline mobilization by enabling recruitment, coordination, and symbolic coherence, which were then consolidated through open meetings and cross-organization collaboration. In this process, collective efficacy was made credible through resource mobilization: participants coordinated material logistics, mobilized human resources, strengthened organizational networks, and produced symbolic propaganda to sustain action. A phenomenological lens further indicates that participation was grounded in both *because motives* (past experiences and accumulated grievances) and *in-order-to motives* (hopes for change), with movement meanings produced intersubjectively across digital and face-to-face interaction.

These conclusions suggest that #IndonesiaGelap in Samarinda should not be understood merely as a trending hashtag. Instead, it illustrates how digitally mediated movements gain momentum through the convergence of injustice perceptions, moral evaluations, group emotions, identity alignment, and coordinated resource mobilization. Social media functions not only as a channel for communication, but also as a space where meanings and solidarities are produced and accelerated, shaping how collective action is consolidated in public space.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. The study is geographically focused on Samarinda, which limits the extent to which the findings can be generalized to other sites where #IndonesiaGelap occurred. The qualitative dataset relies largely on informants from student organizations and allied networks, which may underrepresent other constituencies (for example, older participants or less organized civil society groups). The timeframe analysed captures the movement's peak period but does not allow assessment of long-term sustainability or policy outcomes. Finally, the emphasis on visible content from platforms such as X and Instagram may overlook mobilization that occurred through offline channels or less accessible digital spaces (e.g., private messaging groups).

Future research should therefore: (1) conduct comparative multi-city studies to assess whether SIMCA dynamics and mobilization patterns vary across different local political and social contexts in Indonesia; (2) adopt mixed-methods designs, including surveys, to test the relative weight of SIMCA components (especially collective efficacy and moral motivation) across broader and more diverse participant populations; (3) pursue longitudinal approaches to track how motivations, identities, and emotional repertoires evolve after the initial viral peak and whether they translate into sustained organizational capacity or policy influence; and (4) analyse state and counter-mobilization dynamics in digital arenas to better understand how social media becomes a contested space between public resistance and institutional responses.

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