

Digital traces of the evolution of activist information practices in Kuala Lumpur homelessness advocacy, 2014–2025

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ABSTRACT

This study traces reported information practices in Kuala Lumpur homelessness advocacy across three periods from 2014 to 2025. It uses a qualitative longitudinal comparison of an existing coded record from seven interview sessions with 16 informants in 2014, four news reports from the 2020 to 2021 Movement Control Order, and 15 documentary items from 2022 to 2025. Prior treatments of the Wave 1 corpus are disclosed in the methods section. Template analysis identifies four recurring practices: surfacing the issue, assessing credibility, coordinating action, and sustaining engagement. The sources describe networked mobilisation in 2014, notification and scheduling arrangements during the pandemic, and later public contestation alongside state-mediated and internal coordination. A news-reported viral incident illustrates how public visibility can also arise outside the focal organisations. Visibility-opacity work is proposed as a sensitising concept, with the explicit qualification that the sources do not establish deliberate concealment or protection from surveillance. Differences in data sources and uneven temporal coverage limit claims about change. The study draws out implications for community information services, information literacy, and the design of records and coordination systems.

Keywords: Food aid; Civil society organisations; Community information services; Social media; Malaysia; Qualitative longitudinal research.

INTRODUCTION

Information practices scholarship examines how people seek, evaluate, share, and use information in workplace, everyday life, and community settings (Lloyd, 2010; Savolainen, 2008). Zhong et al. (2023) review the field's development. Digital activism raises related questions about contested information environments. Earl et al. (2022) review digital repression of activism, while Duffy and Meisner (2023) examine social media creators' experiences of algorithmic visibility. These studies supply wider context; the present case does not directly measure digital repression, platform suppression, or recommendation mechanisms.

This paper examines these dynamics through a decade-long case of homelessness activism in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 2014 to 2025. Homelessness advocacy brings visibility and vulnerability into the same information-work field. The documented case includes public challenges to enforcement, donor communication, and service-delivery coordination. Whether advocates deliberately conceal operational information to protect people from surveillance requires evidence beyond the public documents examined here. In Malaysia, homelessness policy has historically combined welfare provision with criminalising measures, producing what Rusenko (2018) characterises as imperatives of care and control. This ambivalence is evident in the 2014 attempt to ban soup kitchens in Kuala Lumpur's business district and again in operations conducted in October 2025 ahead of the ASEAN summit, when 101 people were moved to the Medan Tuanku Homeless Transit Centre (South China Morning Post, 2025).

Earlier scholarship characterised Malaysian civil society as operating within a competitive or electoral authoritarian system (Case, 2011; Giersdorf & Croissant, 2011; Levitsky & Way, 2010), in which formal democratic institutions coexisted with constraints on assembly, expression, and organisation. These studies provide historical context rather than classifying the entire 2014 to 2025 period. Public visibility may help advocates draw attention to policy concerns, but it may also expose them to regulatory attention. The platforms that enable rapid mobilisation (Facebook, WhatsApp, TikTok) are simultaneously spaces of opportunity and of vulnerability. M. Lim (2024) characterises this dual condition across Southeast Asia, arguing that civil-society openings and autocratic algorithmic politics increasingly co-exist within the same platform infrastructures.

The study traces information practices across three critical periods: the 2014 soup kitchen ban and its reversal; the 2020 to 2021 Movement Control Order, which disrupted established service networks; and the 2022 to 2025 period represented by reports of enforcement, service coordination, and public video circulation. Each presented distinct information challenges. The 2014 analytic record reports social media discussion and appeals for news coverage. MCO restrictions disrupted face-to-face service delivery and introduced notification and scheduling requirements (Kosmo, 2021; Malay Mail, 2020a, 2020b). News coverage of a November 2025 incident describes video circulation and public criticism; it does not identify the platform mechanisms responsible for amplification (Sinar Daily, 2025; The Vibes, 2025). Here, information infrastructure refers to the assemblage of platforms, protocols, relationships, and routines through which information flows within and beyond activist networks (Star & Ruhleder, 1996).

This study traces how homelessness advocates in Kuala Lumpur reported their information practices across three periods between 2014 and 2025. The paper offers an information-practices interpretation of a sustained advocacy case under changing service restrictions and media conditions. It also proposes visibility-opacity work as a sensitising concept for examining the relationship between public amplification and operational coordination. The concept identifies questions for further research rather than demonstrating deliberate concealment in this case.

The remainder of the paper is organised as follows. The literature review situates the study within information practices research, digital activism scholarship, and Malaysian civil society and homelessness research. The methods section restates the aim and research questions and describes the longitudinal design, data sources, analytic procedure, trustworthiness strategies, and ethical considerations. The results are presented by research question. The discussion interprets the findings against international literature and draws

implications for library and information science, and the conclusion summarises the contribution and the study's limitations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Information practices in adversarial contexts

Information practices scholarship examines how people seek, evaluate, share, and use information within specific social and material contexts (Savolainen, 2008; Zhong et al., 2023). Savolainen and Thomson (2022) extended this framework to integrate information creating into the everyday information practices model, a development Wang (2024) situates within the field's broader maturation. McKenzie (2003) identifies four modes of information encounter (active seeking, active scanning, non-directed monitoring, and information obtained by proxy). These modes provide a vocabulary for examining mediated information access in the present study. Fisher et al. (2004) applied the concept of information grounds to examine informal information sharing at physical sites where people gather for purposes other than information exchange. Lloyd's (2010) information landscapes capture how people learn to navigate informational features of their environments through ongoing social interaction.

These frameworks offer resources for studying activism, but the present paper asks how they apply when visibility, access, and credibility are contested. Savolainen (2008) already includes environmental activists, so activism is not wholly absent from the everyday information practices tradition. Dervin's (1998) sense-making approach attends to how people bridge informational gaps; the present study focuses on the organisational and inter-organisational enactment of information work. Wardle and Derakhshan (2017) distinguish misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation, while Starbird et al. (2014) examine rumour spread during a crisis. Duffy and Meisner (2023) examine social media creators' experiences of algorithmic visibility and platform governance. These works offer related perspectives; their findings do not, by themselves, establish the information practices of homeless advocacy organisations. The present study examines these concerns by comparing three periods in one advocacy field, while recognising the limits of its uneven sources.

Digital activism and platform dynamics

Bennett and Segerberg's (2012, 2013) distinction between collective action coordinated through formal organisations and connective action enabled by personalised content sharing has been foundational for digital-activism research. Subsequent work has emphasised the continuing importance of organisational anchors within digitally mediated movements (Bernroider et al., 2022; Chadwick, 2017) and the role of corporeal presence in sustaining affective dimensions of campaigns (Showden et al., 2025). Platform-studies scholarship has highlighted how content moderation, recommendation algorithms, and terms of service shape activist possibilities (Etter & Albu, 2021; Gillespie, 2018). Tilly's (1986) concept of repertoires of contention provides a broader lens on contentious action. Sæbø et al. (2020) examine how combinations of social media affordances support collective action. Guo and Saxton (2014) examine social media use in nonprofit advocacy, while Cardoso et al. (2019) study how the combined use of multiple information and communication technologies facilitates and constrains the organisation of consensual collective action.

Earl et al. (2022) review digital repression. Abokhodair et al. (2024) examine automated content moderation during the Sheikh Jarrah crisis, while Elmimouni et al. (2025) investigate activist responses to social media censorship. Within Southeast Asia, M. Lim (2023, 2024)

characterises the regional platform environment as one in which civil-society openings and autocratic algorithmic politics co-exist within the same infrastructures. Jalli (2025) documents TikTok activism in the region. In a commentary, Pratamawaty (2025) discusses a parallel pattern in Indonesia, in which digital activism intensifies even as the underlying regime drifts toward more authoritarian forms.

Malaysian civil society and homelessness scholarship

Malaysian civil society scholarship has documented the distinctive dynamics of activism in a competitive authoritarian context (Case, 2011; Giersdorf & Croissant, 2011; Levitsky & Way, 2010), providing historical context for the advocacy case. Subsequent work has traced how social media enabled the electoral reform movement and various issue-specific mobilisations (Leong et al., 2019), and how it shaped Malaysia's 2022 election through video campaigning (Tapsell, 2023). Research on digitally enabled civic engagement in Malaysia has shown how boundary-spanning actors translate between online and offline spaces in crime-fighting communities (Tim et al., 2017), a rural environmental movement (Tim et al., 2018), and flood-relief coordination (Chong et al., 2014). Leong et al. (2019) introduced power activation and power accrual to describe the processual character of digitally mediated empowerment. These studies provide related accounts of civic mobilisation and online-offline coordination. Their contexts differ from the homelessness advocacy field examined here; the present comparison focuses on reported information practices across distinct policy episodes.

Scholarship specifically addressing homelessness in Malaysia is more limited. Rusenko (2018) provides a historical analysis of how Kuala Lumpur has regulated homelessness, and Rusenko (2020) traces how the legacy of vagrancy law continues to shape homelessness regulation in Kuala Lumpur and Tokyo. Kornatowski and Ching (2024) describe homeless services in Malaysia and Hong Kong as a positive non-policy: the government intervenes, often in times of crisis, without legal obligations and relies heavily on the voluntary sector. Oria et al. (2014) examined NGOs working with homeless populations in Kuala Lumpur; Mohd Rom et al. (2024) examined the support systems required, while Chan et al. (2023) examined social wellbeing during COVID-19. M. J. Lim et al. (2024) examined COVID-19 fear, resilience, urban farming motivation, and life satisfaction in a cross-sectional study of urban poor communities.

Within information science, a recent review of information behaviour research identifies continuing work on people living in poverty and experiencing homelessness (Huvila & Gorichanaz, 2025), and studies of homeless service systems have examined data, recordkeeping, and coordination work as infrastructure (Slota et al., 2023; Tracey et al., 2023). This work focuses largely on formal service provision rather than on grassroots advocacy. The present study examines how homelessness advocacy organisations use information to communicate issues, assess credibility, and coordinate assistance in Kuala Lumpur. It compares reported practices across three sampled periods and uses those records to identify questions about public visibility and operational disclosure that require further investigation.

METHODS

Research aim and questions

This study aims to trace how homelessness advocates in Kuala Lumpur reported their information practices between 2014 and 2025. It addresses three research questions:

RQ1: What recurring information practices are reported in the three sampled periods of homelessness advocacy in Kuala Lumpur?

RQ2: How do their reported forms differ across the sampled policy and crisis contexts? RQ3: What does the available record show about the relationship between public visibility and operational coordination, and what remains unobservable?

Design and longitudinal scope

The study adopts qualitative longitudinal research (QLR) as its overarching methodology, understood as the study of how a phenomenon changes through time (Neale, 2021). Within this methodology, it uses a trend design (Saldaña, 2003). The analysis compares sources relating to three historical periods rather than following a panel of individuals. Wave 1 derives from fieldwork, whereas Waves 2 and 3 are retrospectively compiled documents. The design therefore tracks reported practices in an advocacy field and cannot establish individual trajectories or uninterrupted change. The phenomenon followed is the set of information practices enacted by homelessness advocacy organisations.

The units of evidence differ by wave. Wave 1 (2014) draws on an existing analytic record from 16 informants involved in the soup kitchen ban controversy. Waves 2 (March 2020 to June 2021) and 3 (2022 to 2025) comprise public documents about the same advocacy field; these documents are not participant cohorts. Three organisations whose members were interviewed in 2014, namely Dapur Jalanan, Pertiwi Soup Kitchen, and Kechara Soup Kitchen, appear in the documentary record of both later waves. This anchors the comparison in a common set of actors.

Audulv et al.'s (2023) typology focuses on presenting findings rather than supplying coding categories. Type A uses longitudinal data for limited analysis, Type B structures findings chronologically, and Type C focuses on changes over time. The practice-by-practice comparison here most closely follows Type C, specifically Subtype C1, the longitudinal themes approach. Each practice is described across the three periods; no individual longitudinal cases are claimed. Information practices scholarship (Lloyd, 2010; McKenzie, 2003; Savolainen, 2008), information grounds (Fisher et al., 2004), connective action, and the hybrid media system provide the conceptual frame (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013; Chadwick, 2017).

Cross-wave comparability

Data-source differences are a central limitation. The Wave 1 analytic record can describe routines reported in interviews; public documents capture what organisations, officials, and journalists made reportable. The reappearance of Dapur Jalanan, Pertiwi Soup Kitchen, and Kechara Soup Kitchen provides continuity in organisational context, but not equivalent observations. Although the original Wave 1 study used news and social media case documents (Fauzi, 2022), the present inventory identifies only one 2014 news item. The four Wave 1 practices are anchored primarily in interview-derived codes, not in a matched news-only dataset. Cross-wave comparison therefore concerns reported enactments in heterogeneous sources. It cannot separate all source effects from changes in practice, establish prevalence, or show whether private routines changed in parallel. The source basis is identified in the Results and carried into the limitations and the answer to RQ3.

Disclosure of prior work and researcher positionality

The present authors have previously analysed the Wave 1 interview corpus in two ways: a Structured Pragmatic Situational analysis focused on organisational capacity for social development (Gurumurthy et al., 2016), and a grassroots community-organising analysis in a doctoral thesis chapter (Fauzi, 2022). Neither applied an information practices framework

nor covered the 2020 to 2025 data integrated here. The present paper's lens, longitudinal scope, four-practice framework, and visibility-opacity work concept are novel relative to both. Prior engagement with the Wave 1 corpus provides contextual knowledge but may introduce interpretive familiarity, which the analytic procedure and trustworthiness strategies described below address.

Wave 1: Data sources and sampling (2014)

The Wave 1 corpus comprises seven semi-structured interview sessions with 16 informants directly involved in the response to the soup kitchen directive announced on 3 July 2014 by the Federal Territories Minister. The original account reports that the directive was reversed within four weeks (Fauzi, 2022). All interviews were conducted in 2014 during this controversy. Participants were recruited through purposive sampling. The inclusion criterion was direct involvement in the ban episode, either as an organisation affected by the directive, as an actor responsible for it, or as someone reporting on it. This produced three stakeholder groups: NGO coordinators, founders, and volunteers (Dapur Jalanan, The Nasi Lemak Project, Pertiwi Soup Kitchen, Kechara Soup Kitchen); a journalist from Says.com; and officials from the Federal Territories Ministry. Table 1 summarises the interview sessions.

Following the SPS approach (Pan & Tan, 2011), an initial stage with soup kitchen operators, volunteers, and the journalist was followed by a second stage with further operators, volunteers, and government staff, which confirmed and extended the emerging interpretation (Appendix 1). Where informants' accounts differed, additional data were collected to clarify the differing accounts. Interviews used open-ended questions about the ban and the community response, lasted 45 to 90 minutes, were audio-recorded with consent, and were transcribed verbatim. Newspaper reports and social media posts about the ban were collected as case documents to support the interview data (Fauzi, 2022).

The adequacy of the original Wave 1 sample was assessed retrospectively using information power (Malterud et al., 2016). The original inquiry concerned one policy episode, and the 16 informants represented actors directly involved in the controversy across three stakeholder groups. Its two interview stages allowed emerging interpretations to be revisited. These features support a focused analysis of that episode; they do not establish saturation or adequacy for every practice across the full 2014 to 2025 period. This re-analysis uses the existing coded record rather than recoding all verbatim transcripts. The original study reported stopping collection when further data no longer extended its emerging model (Fauzi, 2022).

Table 1: Interview sessions and informants, Wave 1 (2014)

Session	Informants	Organisation / Affiliation	Year
1	2 co-founders	Dapur Jalanan	2014
2	1 co-founder	The Nasi Lemak Project	2014
3	1 journalist	Says.com	2014
4	1 founder, 1 senior volunteer	Pertiwi Soup Kitchen	2014
5	4 volunteers	Cross-NGO (various affiliations)	2014
6	1 program director, 2 operational staff	Kechara Soup Kitchen	2014

Session	Informants	Organisation / Affiliation	Year
7	1 head of corporate communication, 1 social media administrator, 1 administrator assistant	Federal Territories Ministry	2014

Note. Wave 1 comprised seven semi-structured interview sessions with 16 informants across four soup kitchen organisations, one online news outlet, and the Federal Territories Ministry in 2014. Sessions 1 to 6 covered civil society and grassroots actors; session 7 covered government interlocutors. Dates are reported by year, consistent with the original study account (Fauzi, 2022).

Wave 2: Data sources and sampling (March 2020 to June 2021)

Physical fieldwork was not feasible during the MCO, and Waves 2 and 3 therefore rely on public documents. The documentary corpus was assembled by Ali Fauzi in December 2025 through web and news archive searches on homelessness advocacy in Kuala Lumpur and on the focal organisations, and expanded during revision in 2026. Items were included if they (a) concerned homelessness or food aid to street and urban poor communities in Kuala Lumpur, (b) described an activity of advocacy organisations or a state action affecting them, (c) were published within the wave period for dated news items, and (d) were publicly accessible without login. Items about other cities, and items in which homelessness was incidental, were excluded. The stated retrieval route used web and news archive interfaces rather than platform feeds. Search ranking and media selection may nevertheless favour prominent episodes. The inventory is a purposive, non-exhaustive documentary set; the number of search results is not a population denominator. The analysis is documentary analysis of public texts rather than digital ethnography (Caliandro, 2018; Hine, 2015).

For Wave 2, the criteria yielded four news reports (W2-D1 to W2-D4; Kosmo, 2021; Malay Mail, 2020a, 2020b, 2021) published between March 2020 and April 2021. Together, they cover all three focal organisations as well as other Kuala Lumpur groups (Pit Stop Community Cafe and Buku Jalanan Chow Kit). The corpus is small, but it includes statements attributed to NGO leaders about how their work changed under the MCO or described the state rules that governed it. The 2021 #BenderaPutih campaign was not included because it was a household distress-signalling campaign rather than homelessness advocacy.

Wave 3: Data sources and sampling (2022 to 2025)

Wave 3 comprises 15 items (W3-D1 to W3-D15): 14 news reports and one undated organisational reports page. The dated news items concern enforcement and service coordination between June 2022 and November 2025. They include the June 2022 DBKL operation (W3-D1), the October 2023 Jejak Gelandangan programme (W3-D2), the March 2024 operation and distribution arrangements (W3-D4, W3-D5), and the October 2025 operation ahead of the ASEAN summit (W3-D9). Other items concern organisational work, criticism of hostile design, food distribution, and the November 2025 Taman Maluri incident. The undated Kechara reports index (W3-D8) is a supporting organisational source and an exception to the date criterion, not a dated enforcement episode. It is counted once; linked annual and financial reports are not counted as separately analysed documents.

Short-form videos were not sampled as a separate corpus. Where video was central to an episode, the analysis examined journalists' descriptions and attributed statements, not the video itself. Jasni et al.'s (2024) interview study of 30 homeless former prisoners in Chow Kit Road was used as an independent empirical reference and is not part of the corpus. Table 2

summarises the documentary corpus, and Supplementary Table S1 in Appendix 2 lists every documentary item with its identifier, date, and wave.

Table 2: Documentary corpus by wave

Wave	Source type	Number of items	Date range	Examples
Wave 1	News report (case document)	1 cited in this paper	2014	The Star (2014)
Wave 2	News reports	4	March 2020 to April 2021	Malay Mail (2020a, 2020b, 2021); Kosmo (2021)
Wave 3	News reports	14	June 2022 to November 2025	Malaysiakini (2024); South China Morning Post (2025)
Wave 3	NGO reports page	1	Undated index	Kechara Soup Kitchen (n.d.)

Note. Wave 1 case documents were compiled in the original study (Fauzi, 2022); only the item cited here is listed. Social media posts, videos, and policy documents were not sampled as separate source types. Supplementary Table S1 lists the 20 documentary items identified in this paper: one cited Wave 1 news report, four Wave 2 news reports, and 15 Wave 3 items. It is not a complete inventory of the original Wave 1 case documents.

Data analysis

The analysis followed template analysis, a style of thematic analysis that uses a coding template, allows a priori themes, and revises them against the data (Brooks et al., 2015). This approach fits the study better than reflexive thematic analysis because the analysis began with an existing coded record and concepts from information practices research. This combination follows codebook logic (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The analysis proceeded in four stages.

In the first stage, the Wave 1 coded record from the original SPS analysis, together with its case documents (Fauzi, 2022), was re-read through an information practices lens. Codes describing how people made the ban visible, whom they trusted, how help was organised, and how support was maintained were grouped into four provisional practices. In the second stage, these practices were formalised as an initial template with an operational definition for each (Table 3). In the third stage, the template was applied to the Wave 2 and Wave 3 documents. A passage was coded to a practice when it described an information activity of advocates, or of the state toward advocates. The template was revised where the documents did not fit. For example, Wave 2 documents showed coordination being routed through state notification and scheduling, which added a new indicator to coordinating action. The four practices were retained because each was observable in every wave. However, their labels and indicators emerged through iteration between the provisional template and the later data, rather than from a fixed prior framework. In the fourth stage, each practice was compared across waves by asking what remained stable, what emerged, what diminished, and what was transformed (Saldaña, 2003).

A worked example shows the move from code to practice. A 2020 statement that a local NGO gives donors a reputable focal point so that they are not duped (W2-D2; Malay Mail, 2020b) was coded as *credibility intermediation for donors*. The 2014 code stating that mutual recognition among groups was reinforced (W1-C5), and a 2025 statement asking occasional donors to route aid through registered NGOs and DBKL (W3-D11; Malay Mail, 2025a),

received related codes. These codes clustered under *assessing credibility*, and the differences between them form the cross-wave change reported under RQ2.

Source comparison was used as a credibility check, with important limits. Within Wave 1, the original analytic record and available case documents were read together. In the later waves, statements attributed to organisations and officials were compared across reports of the same episode where available. Reports that repeat the same agency account or institutional statement are corroborating publications, not independent observations. Between waves, the comparison used different source types and cannot be described as a matched news-only triangulation. Coding was undertaken manually without qualitative analysis software. Videos were not coded directly; descriptions of incidents in news reports were the units analysed.

Table 3: Coding template: four information practices and their indicators

Practice	Operationalisation	Indicators by wave
Surfacing the issue	Practices that make the issue visible to publics, authorities, or potential supporters	Social media discussion, appeals for skills, and complaints to newspapers (Wave 1); NGO case-making to authorities reported in the news (Wave 2); news-reported viral video and NGO public critique of clearances and design measures (Wave 3)
Assessing credibility	Practices through which the trustworthiness of claims, actors, or aid channels is assessed or presented	Mutual recognition among known groups (Wave 1); NGO as a reputable focal point for donors and correction of unreliable information (Wave 2); registration presented as an aid channel and data recording roles (Wave 3)
Coordinating action	Practices that align distributed actors toward shared operational goals	Self-organised skills and visible distribution across the city (Wave 1); advance notification under SOPs, scheduling through DBKL, and inter-NGO arrangements (Wave 2); designated distribution sites, schedules shared through DBKL, and volunteer coordinator rosters (Wave 3)
Sustaining engagement	Practices that maintain organisational capacity and public attention across crisis cycles	Implicit support turning into extended support (Wave 1); public donation and volunteer appeals (Wave 2); reports index and campaigns, and volunteer shortage in volunteer-run groups (Wave 3)

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was addressed using Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria. For credibility, the Wave 1 analysis draws on the original interview-derived coded record documented in Fauzi (2022) and Gurumurthy et al. (2016). Table 4 presents identified analytic summaries, and Supplementary Table S1 identifies the documentary sources used in the later waves. Coding decisions were reviewed by the authors, and sources were compared within each period. Repeated reports of one episode were treated as corroborating publications rather than independent observations. For dependability, the original coded record, the four-stage analysis account, the coding template in Table 3, the worked example, and the documentary inventory document the path from source material to the reported practices. To support confirmability, the authors disclose their roles in the original fieldwork and prior analyses, and the Results distinguish analytic interpretation from attributed documentary statements. For transferability, the authors describe the case context, source differences, and limits of the proposed concept. Member checking and external peer debriefing were not undertaken for the re-analysis.

Ethical considerations

The Wave 1 interviews were conducted in 2014 and are documented in Fauzi (2022) and Gurumurthy et al. (2016). Formal ethics approval was not required for this fieldwork under the requirements applicable at the time. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained from all participants, and consent to audio-recording was secured before each interview. Recording interviews with government informants also required prior permission from the relevant departments (Fauzi, 2022). The present study is a secondary analysis, and informants are identified by role and organisation. No new participants were recruited or contacted in Waves 2 and 3; these waves use published news reports and organisational material. The treatment of this public material follows the Association of Internet Researchers' context-sensitive ethical guidelines (franzke et al., 2020), with attention to privacy and potential harm in reporting. No source photographs or video stills are reproduced; Figures 1 to 3 are author-generated analytic diagrams. Individuals experiencing homelessness are not named, even where news reports named them. Named persons are limited to NGO leaders and officials speaking in a public role as reported in the press, and findings are reported mainly in paraphrase with source identifiers.

RESULTS

RQ1: Four recurring information practices

The first research question asked which recurring information practices were reported across the three sampled periods. Four practices were observed in every wave: surfacing the issue, assessing credibility, coordinating action, and sustaining engagement (Table 3). Table 4 lists the Wave 1 coded extracts that anchor these practices in the 2014 data. The extracts are analytic summaries from the original record, not verbatim participant quotations. The source identifiers link each summary to the practice examined in the Results. Figure 1 summarises selected events and reported channels; it does not claim continuous coverage between waves.

Table 4: Wave 1 coded extracts used as evidence

ID	Analytic summary from original record	Practice
W1-C1	The incident was a subject of daily social media discussion	Surfacing the issue
W1-C2	Implicit support became explicit as social media users began to ask how people with various skills could help.	Surfacing the issue; Coordinating action
W1-C3	Medical doctors worked with soup kitchen operators after hours to attend to medical needs; barbers provided their services.	Coordinating action
W1-C4	Members of society made formal complaints against the ban by writing to newspapers and pushed for broadcast coverage.	Surfacing the issue
W1-C5	Mutual recognition and coordination among the groups was reinforced	Assessing credibility
W1-C6	The public knew where to go if they wanted to help; the groups became present in nearly every part of the city where assistance was needed.	Assessing credibility; Coordinating action
W1-C7	Explicit support became extended support, with increased support from many levels of society.	Sustaining engagement
W1-C8	A coalition of 19 soup kitchens and NGOs scrutinised the Destitute Persons Act 1977 on social media during the ban.	Surfacing the issue

Note. Extracts W1-C1 to W1-C7 are preliminary codes from the original SPS analysis; W1-C8 is from its case findings (Fauzi, 2022).

Wave 1 • 2014	Wave 2 • Mar 2020–Jun 2021	Wave 3 • 2022–2025
Selected event 3 July: Federal Territories Minister announces soup kitchen directive. W1-D1	Selected events MCO restriction and distribution SOPs; 2021 distribution-site rules. W2-D1–D3	Selected events Enforcement and distribution rules; late-2025 public video episode. W3-D1–D2, D4–D5, D9, D11–D15
Reported channels Social media discussion, offers of skills, newspaper complaints. W1-C1–C4, W1-C8	Reported channels NGO statements in news; notification, scheduling, and Facebook referrals. W2-D2–D4	Reported channels NGO critique in news, DBKL schedules, coordinator roles, video described in news. W3-D7, D9–D15

2015–2019 and Jul–Dec 2021 were not sampled. Coverage within waves is also uneven. W1-C identifiers refer to original-record analytic summaries; channels were not measured for dominance.

Figure 1: Selected events and reported information channels, Kuala Lumpur, 2014 to 2025

Figure 1 summarises the three sampled periods. The 2014 directive was announced by the Federal Territories Minister; later items describe NGO distribution rules, enforcement, and public responses. Channels are reported in the sources rather than measured for dominance. The study did not sample 2015 to 2019 or July to December 2021, and it does not provide continuous coverage within the sampled periods either.

RQ2: Differences in reported practices across sampled periods

The second research question asked how their reported forms differ across the sampled policy and crisis contexts. The four functions recur in the sampled records, while their reported forms differ. This is not evidence that any one form displaced all others or persisted continuously between observations. The reported forms are compared practice by practice.

i. Surfacing the issue: public communication and witnessing

2014: Connective action through networked amplification

During the soup kitchen ban controversy, surfacing the issue followed the connective action pattern Bennett and Segerberg (2013) described. The incident became a daily social media topic (W1-C1), and implicit support turned explicit as users asked how people with particular skills could help (W1-C2). Members of the public also wrote formal complaints to newspapers and pushed for broadcast coverage (W1-C4). A coalition of 19 soup kitchens and NGOs used social media to scrutinise the Destitute Persons Act 1977 (W1-C8). These analytic summaries are interpreted as networked mobilisation; they do not identify a measured diffusion mechanism. The original account reports that the directive was reversed within four weeks (Fauzi, 2022); this sequence does not isolate social media's causal contribution.

2020 to 2021: Case-making to authorities

During the MCO, reports emphasised making the case for NGO access to authorities through news media. When the expanded MCO took effect, NGOs were advised to stop delivering food directly to people in need, and Pit Stop Community Cafe served a last round of meals before closing (W2-D1; Malay Mail, 2020a). NGOs then argued publicly that they should be allowed to continue. The founder of Buku Jalanan Chow Kit told a newspaper that local NGOs know the community better and that authorities need to work with them, and the chairman of Dapur Jalanan described continued food provision as a way to bring these issues to the table (W2-D2; Malay Mail, 2020b). Within days, the government reversed the halt and issued standard operating procedures for aid distribution (W2-D2; Malay Mail, 2020b). A year on,

Dapur Jalanan used press coverage to report that some of the people it served had not known about the stay-at-home order when it began and had asked which home they could go to (W2-D4; Malay Mail, 2021). In this documentary set, surfacing is visible through NGO statements in the news; the set cannot establish the relative volume of social media mobilisation.

2022 to 2025: Viral witnessing and public contestation

The Taman Maluri incident illustrates news-reported viral witnessing in late 2025. A video showing a man sleeping rough being sprayed with water and kicked circulated online, and AmBank issued an apology on 25 November (W3-D12 to W3-D14; Free Malaysia Today, 2025b; Sinar Daily, 2025; The Vibes, 2025). A subsequent report described his account of withheld wages and a confiscated passport (W3-D15; Malay Mail, 2025b). This episode links public visibility to reported institutional response, but neither the speed of that response nor the role of recommendation algorithms was measured. It concerns public witnessing and journalism rather than evidence that the focal NGOs produced or strategically amplified the video. It is therefore an illustrative visibility episode, not proof of a general shift in NGO practice.

Such incidents are best read against a multi-year cycle of enforcement rather than as one-off events. Operations across central Kuala Lumpur illustrate the enforcement context. Jasni et al. (2024) separately studied homeless former prisoners in Chow Kit; this does not mean that every operation targeted that subgroup. The June 2022 DBKL operation was reported as having "rescued" 41 people, including four foreign nationals (Malaysia Gazette, 2022); the October 2023 Jejak Gelandangan programme, run with the NGO Pertubuhan Jejak Jalanan, covered Lorong Haji Taib and other central areas, and the minister said MAIWP would discuss coordination with DBKL and the welfare department (Malay Mail, 2023); the March 2024 *Operasi Bersepadu Menyelamatkan Gelandangan*, which the Federal Territories Minister joined, deployed 203 officers and personnel and brought 150 individuals to a homeless service centre in its first hours (Malaysiakini, 2024; Sinar Harian, 2024); and in October 2025, an operation ahead of the ASEAN summit took 101 people, including 27 foreign nationals, to the Medan Tuanku Homeless Transit Centre (South China Morning Post, 2025). NGO surfacing in this wave took the form of public contestation of these operations and of their framing. Volunteer-run soup kitchens told the press that such clearances were performative and recurred whenever Kuala Lumpur hosted international events (W3-D9; South China Morning Post, 2025). When the government said it was studying design features that discourage people from sleeping in public spaces, Yellow House KL and Yayasan Chow Kit publicly criticised the plan as symbolic and exclusionary (W3-D10; Free Malaysia Today, 2025a).

ii. Assessing credibility: recognition, donor intermediation, and registration

2014: Credibility through recognition

The 2014 coded record does not describe explicit verification routines. It shows credibility attached to recognised groups. Mutual recognition and coordination among the groups strengthened during the controversy (W1-C5), and the public learned which groups to approach if they wanted to help (W1-C6). Because these codes derive from interviews and have no counterpart in the case documents, this finding rests on a data type available only in Wave 1.

2020 to 2021: Reputation and correction under crisis conditions

The MCO moved credibility work in two directions. First, organisations presented themselves as trustworthy intermediaries for donors. The founder of Buku Jalanan Chow Kit described her group as a reputable focal point through which the public could send aid

without being duped (W2-D2; Malay Mail, 2020b). The state added its own credential: under the new procedures, groups wishing to distribute aid had to show that they were welfare-oriented organisations (W2-D2; Malay Mail, 2020b). Second, organisations worked to correct unreliable information. In April 2021, Dapur Jalanan reported working on vaccine registration awareness among the people it served, many of whom were relying on unreliable sources (W2-D4; Malay Mail, 2021).

2022 to 2025: Credibility through registration

In the November 2025 report, registration marked the organised channel through which aid could be coordinated. The president of Pertiwi explained that registered NGOs already shared their schedules with DBKL, and she urged occasional volunteers and donors to approach DBKL first so that registered groups could check what was being brought and in what quantity (W3-D11; Malay Mail, 2025a). The analysis interprets this as credibility attached to formal status and an established channel; the report does not show that registration replaced personal trust or guaranteed reliable aid. A separate report describes recordkeeping in a volunteer-run group: Dapur Jalanan's rotating coordinator roles include recording and researching relevant data (W3-D7; Scoop, 2025).

iii. Coordinating action: assistance and operational arrangements

2014: Mobilisation through public ubiquity

In 2014, coordination was characterised by public ubiquity. Groups with particular skills organised assistance, such as doctors working with soup kitchen operators after hours and barbers offering their services (W1-C3), and they became present in nearly every part of the city where assistance was needed (W1-C6). The codes support distributed and publicly visible assistance; they do not reveal whether all underlying coordination was public.

2020 to 2021: Coordination through state procedures

The Wave 2 reports describe state requirements alongside inter-NGO coordination. The April 2020 operating procedures allowed only dry food or cooking ingredients to be distributed and required groups to notify the state welfare department a day before any distribution (W2-D2; Malay Mail, 2020b). Dapur Jalanan reported cooperation from the Federal Territories Ministry on security controls, assistance from the Malaysian People Volunteer Corps (Rela), and coordination and storage arrangements with other NGOs. It also worked with Tenaganita, Liga Rakyat Demokratik, and Refuge for the Refugees to supply 1,183 migrant and refugee families (W2-D2; Malay Mail, 2020b). By April 2021, DBKL limited food distribution in the city centre to three locations and asked groups to contact it to regulate and schedule distribution (W2-D3; Kosmo, 2021). Kechara Soup Kitchen, meanwhile, redistributed surplus groceries through a collaboration with a supermarket chain (W2-D4; Malay Mail, 2021).

2022 to 2025: Centralised and hybrid coordination

The third-wave reports describe continuing distribution arrangements, without measuring how routinely they were followed. During the March 2024 operation, NGOs and individuals were advised to channel Ramadan donations through three designated sites, including the Pusat Pembelajaran Komuniti Chow Kit (Malaysiakini, 2024; Sinar Harian, 2024). In November 2025, DBKL announced that food distribution must follow scheduled, centralised routes at designated centres, and the president of Pertiwi noted that basic coordination with DBKL had been in place since after the pandemic (W3-D11; Malay Mail, 2025a). Kechara Soup Kitchen collects surplus food daily through partnerships with retailers such as Lotus's and AEON (The Star, 2024). Volunteer-run groups such as Dapur Jalanan kept their weekly service at Jalan Panggung (Citizens Journal, 2024) and ran it through a roster of 30 to 40

rotating coordinators with defined roles for supply orders, data, and finance (W3-D7; Scoop, 2025).

iv. Sustaining engagement: support, appeals, and organisational capacity

2014: Episodic surge

The analytic record describes increased public support during the 2014 controversy. Explicit support became extended support, drawn from many levels of society (W1-C7). The coded record ends with the reversal of the ban and the city's move to build shelters (Fauzi, 2022). It does not document whether this engagement was sustained afterwards, so the 2014 pattern is best described as an episodic surge tied to the shock of the ban.

2020 to 2021: Public appeals through the news

During the MCO, organisations issued public appeals carried by news coverage. Reports on Buku Jalanan Chow Kit and Dapur Jalanan ended with contact and donation details (W2-D2; Malay Mail, 2020b). In April 2021, Pertiwi reported distributing about 1,000 food packs a day in Medan Tuanku and Chow Kit; Kechara announced a new food bank and invited public donations, and readers were directed to the organisations' Facebook pages to volunteer or give (W2-D4; Malay Mail, 2021).

2022 to 2025: Reporting, campaigns, and volunteer continuity

The post-pandemic sources describe reporting, campaigns, and volunteer continuity. Kechara maintains an annual and financial reports index (W3-D8; Kechara Soup Kitchen, n.d.) and undertakes campaigns with retail partners, including its World Food Day 2024 campaign (W3-D6; The Star, 2024). Dapur Jalanan described food as a way to make the urban poor visible and directed donors to an online giving platform (W3-D3; Citizens Journal, 2024). By January 2025, it had reportedly cancelled several distribution sessions because of a shortage of coordinators (W3-D7; Scoop, 2025). These examples suggest different emphases in reporting, campaigns, and volunteer continuity. They do not establish organisational size as the cause or show that either strategy is exclusive to one type of group.

RQ3: Visibility and coordination in the documentary record

RQ3 asks what the available record shows about public visibility and operational coordination. For visibility, the documents include NGO criticism of enforcement and hostile design (W3-D9, W3-D10; Free Malaysia Today, 2025a; South China Morning Post, 2025). Reports of the Taman Maluri episode describe the circulation of public video and an institutional response (W3-D12 to W3-D15). These are distinct forms of visibility: organisational advocacy and witnessing that arose outside the focal NGOs.

For coordination, the reports describe advance notification, designated distribution sites, schedules shared through DBKL, and rotating coordinator roles (W2-D2, W2-D3, W3-D7, W3-D11). Thus, public advocacy coexists with state-mediated and internal operational arrangements. The reports do not reproduce the full schedules or rosters. Their omission is not evidence that advocates deliberately concealed them, that they were inaccessible elsewhere, or that they protected anyone from surveillance. The corpus contains no direct observations of closed or encrypted channels. RQ3 can therefore identify a relationship worth investigating but cannot establish a visibility-concealment strategy or its protective effect.

DISCUSSION

The comparison identifies recurring information functions and differences in how the three sampled periods represent their enactment. The 2014 analytic record emphasises networked mobilisation; later news reports describe notification, scheduling, and public contestation. A late-2025 incident illustrates visibility generated through circulating video. Regional studies make algorithmic mediation a relevant context (Jalli, 2025; M. Lim, 2023, 2024), but the present corpus cannot demonstrate a transition from social-network diffusion to recommendation-driven amplification. The findings concern reported practices and must be read in light of differences in data sources.

Beyond connective action: visibility-opacity work

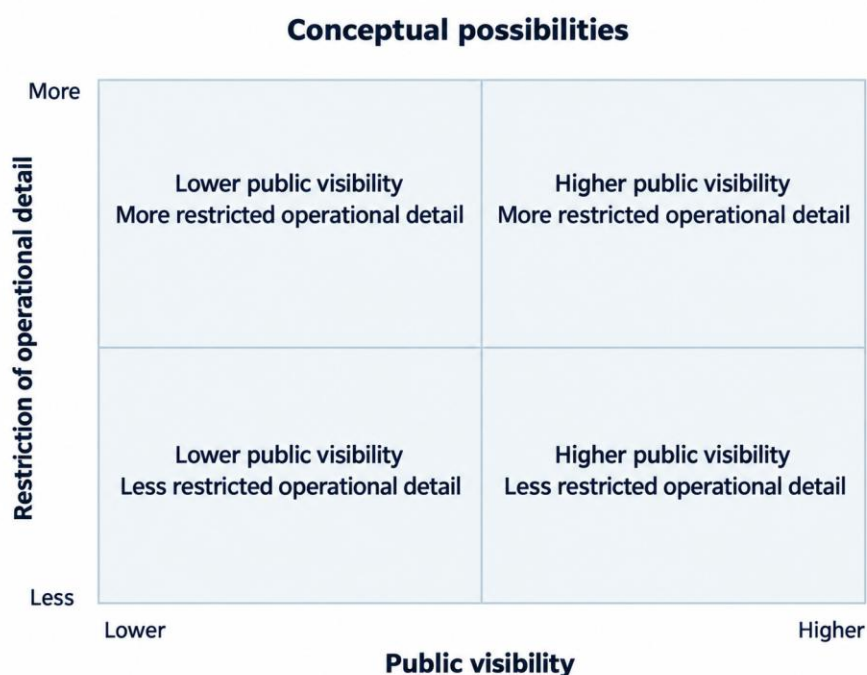
The 2014 findings are consistent with Bennett and Segerberg's (2013) theory of connective action: the analytic summaries describe social media discussion and offers of assistance. The later documents are considered alongside this framework. News-reported video circulation offers one route to visibility, while the documents also show continuing public NGO advocacy. The study does not compare platforms, audience reach, or recommendation mechanisms. At the same time, advocates contest official framing in public, as when volunteer-run soup kitchens described the October 2025 clearances as performative (South China Morning Post, 2025).

For surfacing the issue, Guo and Saxton's (2014) study of US nonprofit advocacy messages identifies outreach, relationship building, and calls to action as connected forms of social media advocacy. The Kuala Lumpur findings similarly link public communication with offers of assistance and support. The latter records extend this comparison to NGO statements carried by news organisations, while the Taman Maluri example shows visibility arising outside NGO-authored campaigns.

Visibility-opacity work is proposed as a sensitising concept (Blumer, 1954) for investigating how public grievances relate to the disclosure or restriction of operational detail. In this case, public criticism and video circulation coexist with state-mediated scheduling and internal coordination. These observations motivate the concept but do not establish deliberate opacity. The bank apology is a reported response, not a measured causal effect of amplification. Figure 2 presents possible combinations of visibility and restriction as a conceptual schema; no wave is assigned a measured or inferred position.

Figure 2 separates public visibility from restriction of operational detail. Its quadrants are conceptual possibilities, not scores, observed states, or a trajectory for the three waves. The documents show public communications and reported coordination arrangements; they do not establish the degree of restriction or concealment. Assessing those dimensions would require direct evidence from consenting organisations.

The documentary record does not establish whether advocates deliberately used closed channels, encrypted communication, or restricted schedules. It does show that notification, registration, and scheduling requirements mediate some coordination. Whether these arrangements improve protection, increase exposure to enforcement, or do both remains an empirical question. Jasni et al. (2024) describe avoidance as a coping strategy among homeless former prisoners; their study does not establish how the NGOs in this case handle operational information.



No scores, wave positions, or observed trajectory.
 The documentary sources do not establish the degree of restriction.

Figure 2: Conceptual combinations of public visibility and restriction of operational detail

The concept overlaps with two lines of work, and its contribution needs to be stated in relation to them. Etter and Albu (2021), in an ethnography of two social movement organisations in Tunisia, show how platform algorithms both support collective affordances and distort organising through information overload, opacity, and disinformation. In their account, opacity is an algorithmic property that activists cannot see into. Duffy and Meisner (2023) examine how creators at the margins experience platform governance as algorithmic (in)visibility, that is, visibility that platforms grant or withhold. Both studies also attend to how actors respond to platform conditions. The narrower proposed extension here is to examine public visibility together with operational disclosure across news, organisational routines, and state procedures. This is a shift in analytical scope rather than a claim to have discovered visibility management itself. The documentary evidence motivates this extension but does not establish deliberate concealment in the advocate-state relationship.

The population at the centre of homelessness advocacy in Kuala Lumpur is also heterogeneous in ways the term "homeless" obscures. The Taman Maluri report describes a migrant worker from Tamil Nadu who alleged withheld wages and a confiscated passport; it does not establish the duration of his homelessness (Malay Mail, 2025b). Jasni et al. (2024) studied homeless former prisoners in Chow Kit; that purposive sample does not establish their prevalence in the area. Kornatowski and Ching (2024) describe homeless services in Malaysia as heavily dependent on the voluntary sector, so NGOs end up serving groups with very different needs and risks. These contextual examples suggest that advocacy may involve populations with different needs and risks; the study did not measure changes in their composition. This interpretation connects to scholarship on context-sensitive approaches in the Global South (M. Lim, 2023, 2024; Milan & Treré, 2019). It suggests that for activists in constrained media environments, the information infrastructure (Star & Ruhleder, 1996) that sustains advocacy can be understood as a layered arrangement in which public signals, news coverage, and state-mediated coordination sit in different layers.

Credibility across organisational relationships and formal channels

The records describe recognition among known groups in 2014, donor intermediation and vaccine-information work during the MCO, and registered coordination channels in 2025. For assessing credibility, an empirical parallel appears in Showden et al.'s (2025) interviews and observations of youth-led activist groups in Aotearoa New Zealand: ActionStation participants described face-to-face contact as important for developing trust alongside online activism. Both cases highlight relationships through which actors become trusted. The Kuala Lumpur documents also describe donor intermediation and registration as publicly presented bases of credibility; they do not demonstrate that registration displaced personal trust. Lloyd's (2010) account of information literacy as socially situated provides a related interpretive frame. The 2025 advice to occasional donors concerns routing aid through established channels (W3-D11), not a measured test of donors' credibility.

Toward a processual model of activist information practices

The four practices provide a way to compare reported information functions across the sampled periods. The sources describe publicly visible assistance in 2014, notification and scheduling during the MCO, and designated sites and shared schedules in later reports. They do not establish that private coordination was absent in 2014 or that later arrangements displaced earlier ones. Figure 3 summarises these reported forms with source identifiers. The framework shifts attention from social media use alone to information work across organisational, media, and state channels. It is intended as an analytical tool for examining other sustained advocacy contexts, not as a demonstrated account of continuous adaptation or a closed taxonomy.

Practice	Wave 1 · 2014	Wave 2 · 2020–2021	Wave 3 · 2022–2025
Surfacing the issue	Social media discussion, skills appeals, news complaints W1-C1–C2, C4, C8	NGO case-making and public communication W2-D1–D2, D4	NGO public critique; public witnessing outside NGOs W3-D9–D10, D12–D15
Assessing credibility	Mutual recognition; known groups to approach W1-C5–C6	Donor intermediation; vaccine-information work W2-D2, D4	Registered channels; recordkeeping roles W3-D7, D11
Coordinating action	Skills-based assistance; publicly visible distribution W1-C2–C3, C6	Notification, scheduling, inter-NGO arrangements W2-D2–D4	Sites, shared schedules, retail links, coordinator roster W3-D3–D7, D11
Sustaining engagement	Extended public support within the policy episode W1-C7	Donation and volunteer appeals through news W2-D2, D4	Reporting, campaigns; volunteer continuity pressures W3-D3, D6–D8

Source identifiers correspond to Table 4 and Supplementary Table S1. Columns compare sampled periods.
Repeated reports are not independent observations; the matrix does not show a causal or continuous trajectory.

Figure 3: Four activist information practices across three waves, Kuala Lumpur, 2014 to 2025

For coordinating action, Soden and Owen's (2021) interviews with New York mutual aid organisers describe digital workflows for tracking assistance and managing logistics, alongside differing approaches to working with government. The Kuala Lumpur record similarly combines inter-organisational arrangements with negotiations over state involvement, but its reported notification requirements, designated sites, and shared

schedules concern specific local procedures. This comparison locates coordination in organisational relationships and rules rather than attributing it to a platform alone.

Each cell in Figure 3 summarises a reported practice in a wave and provides the source identifiers on which it rests. The columns compare sampled periods rather than depicting a causal or measured trajectory.

For sustaining engagement, Soden and Owen (2021) report concerns about burnout, participant turnover, and the long-term viability of emergent mutual aid groups. Dapur Jalanan's reported coordinator shortages and cancelled sessions provide a parallel concern in an established volunteer-run group (W3-D7). Kechara's reports index and campaigns illustrate other ways to maintain public engagement. The comparison highlights continuity as work involving volunteers, resources, and communication; it does not establish which organisational approach is more effective.

The framework requires testing beyond this case. Future comparisons could examine whether regulatory constraints, organisational resources, platform conditions, and risks to service users affect public communication and operational disclosure. The current study cannot predict that greater civil-liberties protection eliminates opacity, or that severe repression eliminates visibility. Nor does it establish which practices are present in short-cycle protest. Direct observations and contrasting cases are needed to assess the proposed concept and its boundaries.

Implications for library and information science

The findings carry several implications for LIS research and practice. For community information services, the study shows NGOs acting as information intermediaries for people who cannot easily reach official information, as when Dapur Jalanan found that the people it served had not known about the MCO and later worked on vaccine registration awareness (W2-D4; Malay Mail, 2021). Public and community libraries serving urban poor populations could treat such organisations as partners in information provision rather than only as referral points. For information literacy, the findings suggest considering organisational routines alongside individual source evaluation. This is a practical implication rather than an evaluated training intervention. Finally, the movement of coordination into registration and scheduling systems connects this case to LIS work on homeless services as data and records infrastructure (Slota et al., 2023; Tracey et al., 2023). Information professionals designing such systems should consider how registration requirements shape which givers and recipients become visible to the state.

CONCLUSIONS

Across three sampled periods, the sources report four recurring information practices in Kuala Lumpur homelessness advocacy: surfacing issues, assessing credibility, coordinating action, and sustaining engagement. The comparison links networked mobilisation in the Wave 1 record with later reports of public contestation, state-mediated coordination, and volunteer organisation. Visibility-opacity work is offered as a sensitising concept for investigating the relationship between public amplification and operational disclosure. The evidence does not establish deliberate concealment, protection from surveillance, or a platform-driven causal transition. Its contribution is an interpretation of information practices and a set of questions for further research.

For practitioners, the findings suggest that NGOs may strengthen advocacy by institutionalising documentation and data recording, by planning for volunteer continuity in volunteer-run groups, and by engaging with registration and scheduling schemes while keeping in view the exposure these schemes may create for the people they serve. Future research should apply the framework to other advocacy domains, investigating how temporal adaptations differ across causes such as environmentalism, labour rights, and refugee advocacy. Studies with consenting organisations could examine closed coordination channels directly, which this design could not do. Research should also shift attention to marginalised communities themselves: understanding how people experiencing homelessness navigate city services and digital platforms, and how they engage in their own credibility work, remains an urgent priority for inclusive information science.

Several limitations should be noted. First, the study centres on the information practices of intermediaries (activists and NGO workers) and does not document the information practices of homeless people themselves. Second, Wave 1 relies on an interview-derived analytic record, whereas the later waves rely on documents. The original Wave 1 analytic record and the later documents do not form a matched news-only dataset, and differences may reflect source effects. Third, the Wave 2 corpus is small (four reports), although each includes extended statements by NGO leaders or the rules governing their work. Fourth, the documentary corpus was compiled through web and news archive searches, which favour prominent coverage, and includes the Taman Maluri incident described in the press as viral. No engagement ranking was measured, and the illustrative witnessing case cannot represent typical advocacy content. Fifth, the design cannot observe closed or encrypted coordination, so it cannot establish the restriction or concealment dimension of visibility-opacity work. Absence of operational detail from news reports is not evidence of deliberate concealment. Sixth, the Wave 1 re-analysis worked from the coded record of the original study, and prior engagement with that corpus (Fauzi, 2022; Gurumurthy et al., 2016) creates a risk that interpretive familiarity shaped the current reading. The first author conducted the coding, and the second author reviewed it. The later documentary sources extend the comparison beyond the prior Wave 1 treatments. These measures do not rule out interpretive familiarity; member checking and external peer debriefing were not undertaken for the re-analysis. Finally, dated Wave 3 news coverage is uneven, and the undated organisational reports index is mutable. Multiple reports of one episode may repeat the same statement and cannot be treated as independent observations. The Taman Maluri incident is an illustrative witnessing case, not direct evidence of the focal NGOs' media strategy.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research received no specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors. The authors used Anthropic's Claude and OpenAI's ChatGPT for writing assistance, figure preparation, and citation auditing, and then thoroughly checked and edited all outputs. AI tools were not listed as authors, and the authors bear full responsibility for the manuscript.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper. This paper extends and re-analyses interview data first reported in Gurumurthy et al. (2016)

through an information practices lens and later analysed through a grassroots community-organising lens in the first author's doctoral thesis (Fauzi, 2022). Both prior treatments are disclosed in the methods section.

ETHICAL APPROVAL AND INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENTS

The Wave 1 interviews were conducted in 2014 and are documented in Fauzi (2022) and Gurumurthy et al. (2016). Formal ethics approval was not required for this fieldwork under the requirements applicable at the time. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained from all participants, and consent to audio-recording was secured prior to each interview. The present study is a secondary analysis of these data by the team that collected them. Informants are identified by role and organisation. No new participants were recruited or contacted in Waves 2 (2020 to 2021) and 3 (2022 to 2025), which use published news reports and organisational material. No source photographs or video stills are reproduced, individuals experiencing homelessness are not named, and the treatment of the public material follows the Association of Internet Researchers ethical guidelines (Franzke et al., 2020).

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualisation: Ali Fauzi, Shamshul Bahri; Methodology: Ali Fauzi; Formal analysis and investigation: Ali Fauzi; Writing - original draft preparation: Ali Fauzi; Writing - review and editing: Ali Fauzi, Shamshul Bahri; Supervision: Shamshul Bahri.

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Appendix 1: Wave 1 Interview Protocol As Documented In The Original Study

The original study followed the eight-step SPS process (Pan & Tan, 2011). Interviews took place at two of these steps, summarised below from Fauzi (2022). Table 1.1 presents the interview stages, participants, purposes, and question focus documented in that study.

Table 1.1: Interview stages in the Wave 1 fieldwork (2014)

SPS step	Informants	Purpose	Question focus
Step 3: Collecting and organising initial data	Soup kitchen operators, volunteers, and a journalist	Validate the phenomenon	Open-ended questions on the ban incident and the community response
Step 5: Confirming and validating data	Further soup kitchen operators, volunteers, and government agency staff	Confirm and extend the emerging interpretation; resolve differing accounts	Open-ended questions on the ban and the response, with follow-up where informants' accounts differed; case documents analysed for triangulation

Appendix 2: Documentary source inventory

Supplementary Table S1: Documentary sources by identifier, date, and wave

ID	Date	Source	Title (short)	Type	Wave
W1-D1	3 Jul 2014	The Star	Tengku Adnan: Soup kitchens banned within 2km radius of city centre	News	1
W2-D1	31 Mar 2020	Malay Mail	With blanket ban on relief NGOs, soup kitchen Pit Stop serves last meal	News	2
W2-D2	5 Apr 2020	Malay Mail	How charity groups are helping the poor and vulnerable get by amid tighter MCO	News	2
W2-D3	10 Apr 2021	Kosmo	Hanya tiga lokasi dibenarkan untuk agih makanan pada gelandangan	News	2
W2-D4	22 Apr 2021	Malay Mail	More than a year after Covid-19, Malaysian soup kitchens, companies still feeding the poor who need help	News	2
W3-D1	25 Jun 2022	Malaysia Gazette	Gelandangan ibu kota 'diselamatkan' DBKL	News	3
W3-D2	7 Oct 2023	Malay Mail	Minister says more systematic, orderly, effective system required to help the homeless in KL	News	3
W3-D3	7 Mar 2024	Citizens Journal	Dapur Jalanan: A lifeline for Kuala Lumpur's urban poor	News	3
W3-D4	9 Mar 2024	Malaysiakini	Sumbangan sempena Ramadan di KL hanya boleh disalurkan di 3 lokasi	News	3
W3-D5	9 Mar 2024	Sinar Harian	Hanya tiga lokasi sumbangan Ramadan ditetapkan di KL	News	3
W3-D6	16 Oct 2024	The Star	Tengku Zatashah launches Kechara Soup Kitchen's World Food Day 2024 Campaign	News	3
W3-D7	1 Jan 2025	Scoop	Charity burnout: Soup kitchen Dapur Jalanan needs fresh faces or risks closure	News	3
W3-D8	Undated index	Kechara Soup Kitchen	Annual reports and financial statements (reports page)	NGO reports page	3
W3-D9	17 Oct 2025	South China Morning Post	Malaysia rounds up homeless ahead of ASEAN summit	News	3
W3-D10	6 Nov 2025	Free Malaysia Today	Groups criticise move to use 'anti-homeless' infrastructure	News	3
W3-D11	20 Nov 2025	Malay Mail	KL soup kitchens say centralised food plan misses bigger issues of shelter and access	News	3
W3-D12	25 Nov 2025	Free Malaysia Today	AmBank apologises after man mistreated outside Taman Maluri branch	News	3
W3-D13	25 Nov 2025	Sinar Daily	Security guard and cobbler assault homeless man, sparking online fury	News	3
W3-D14	25 Nov 2025	The Vibes	Bank apologises after homeless man sprayed with water, kicked outside its branch	News	3
W3-D15	29 Nov 2025	Malay Mail	Viral video of homeless man kicked while sleeping reveals migrant worker's nightmare in Malaysia	News	3

Note. This inventory contains one cited Wave 1 news report, four Wave 2 reports, and 15 Wave 3 items. W3-D8 is an undated organisational reports index, counted once; linked reports are not additional analysed items. The March 2024 reports and the Taman Maluri reports concern shared episodes, so publication counts do not equal independent observations. Full references are given in the reference list.