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Live Streaming Donations as a Promotional Medium for Micro Enterprises: A Qualitative Content Analysis of Marapthon The Last Tale on YouTube

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Abstract

Live streaming has developed into a digital communication space where entertainment, audience participation, creator monetization, and commercial communication intersect. This study examines how promotional messages representing local businesses are constructed through donation alerts during Marapthon: The Last Tale on YouTube. Using a descriptive qualitative approach and qualitative content analysis, the study analyzes 243 promotional donation alerts selected from two temporally contrasting streaming periods, consisting of 53 messages from the initial phase and 190 messages from the final phase before the donation feature was discontinued. The analysis applies a hybrid deductive–inductive coding framework covering four dimensions: message structure, communication style, call to action, and attention-seeking strategy. Findings show that promotional messages are predominantly structured around brand identification, product or service information, and access or purchasing information. Informational and conversational styles are the most common communication patterns, while direct calls to action frequently redirect audiences to business-owned digital channels. Direct address to streamers or viewers emerges as the dominant attention-seeking strategy. Froms an attention economy perspective, donation alerts function as a form of platform-mediated promotional visibility, where financial contributions provide temporary access to an existing audience's attention rather than direct advertising effectiveness. The study contributes to digital communication and digital entrepreneurship research by identifying donation alerts as an alternative promotional practice within the creator economy.

Keywords: *live streaming; donation alert; local business; digital entrepreneurship; attention economy*

INTRODUCTION

Live streaming has evolved from a form of real-time digital entertainment into a communication space that simultaneously connects creators, audiences, platforms, and commercial actors [1].

Audiences may also provide emotional, instrumental, and financial support to creators as part of the relationships established within the live streaming ecosystem [2]. Such relationships demonstrate parasocial characteristics, where audiences develop feelings of familiarity and attachment toward media figures despite the asymmetric nature of the interaction [3]. In commercial contexts, the interactive characteristics of live streaming

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enable direct product communication and can enhance consumer engagement and trust [4]. Therefore, live streaming is not merely a content distribution channel but also a communication environment where interaction and visibility generate economic value.

This dynamic can be observed through the use of donation alerts. This feature primarily facilitates financial support from viewers to streamers; however, the accompanying messages also obtain temporary visibility on the screen. This condition is relevant to the attention economy perspective, which considers attention as a scarce resource within an environment characterized by information abundance [5]Franck and Grinberg further argue that within digital media environments, attention is not distributed equally but tends to concentrate around specific points that have already accumulated audiences, making access to these attention hubs economically valuable [5]. Therefore, financial contributions through donation alerts can be understood not only as support for creators but also as mechanisms that provide temporary access to established concentrations of audience attention.

This understanding should be positioned within studies of platform-mediated visibility. Visibility on digital platforms is not a natural condition but rather a result of technical architectures that determine who becomes visible and who remains invisible, making invisibility a risk that actors must actively manage [6]. Cotter expands this argument by demonstrating that actors actively participate in a "visibility game," strategically navigating platform mechanisms to achieve greater exposure [6]. Meanwhile, Nieborg and Poell describe platformization as a process in which platform infrastructures and mechanisms shape the production of participation, visibility, and economic value [7]. Gillespie further emphasizes that platforms function as boundary controllers that regulate the circulation of content within digital environments [8]. Existing literature explains visibility obtained through self-owned channels or algorithmic distribution systems; however, it has not sufficiently addressed visibility obtained through purchasing temporary access to a third-party channel.

This phenomenon can be observed in Marapthon: The Last Tale, a 101-day marathon entertainment broadcast on YouTube that attracted a nationwide Indonesian audience. The program adopts a subathon concept, defined as a long-duration live streaming event controlled by a timer mechanism. The streaming duration continuously increases whenever viewers provide support through mechanisms such as subscriptions or donations. Through this format, audiences are not merely spectators but also active participants who influence the continuity of the broadcast.

In addition to personal support messages, several donation alerts in this broadcast contain promotional messages from business actors. These messages include brand identity, product or service information, product benefits, pricing information, digital accounts, and purchase invitations. These elements correspond with advertising information cues, including product information, quality, price, availability, and special offers [9]. Brand identification is also important because it allows audiences to associate

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promotional information with specific brands and develop brand knowledge [10]. Furthermore, promotional messages may employ various communication strategies, including informational, transformational, conversational, humorous, and directive approaches that encourage audience action [9]. Because these messages appear without explicit advertising labels, the practice functionally resembles native advertising, where effectiveness and ethical considerations are strongly influenced by disclosure practices[11].

The state of the art indicates that previous live streaming studies have predominantly examined audience motivations and engagement [1], financial support toward creators [2], and trust and engagement within live commerce environments [4]. At a broader level, platform studies have investigated how platforms shape cultural production and creator monetization [7], [8]. Meanwhile, digital entrepreneurship studies demonstrate that digital technologies enable new entrepreneurial processes and practices through the utilization of digital infrastructures [12]. However, donation alerts as promotional communication units used by businesses within creator-led live streaming remain relatively underexplored, particularly in the Southeast Asian context. This phenomenon is significant because it combines financial contribution, platform-based visibility, and promotional message construction within a single communication practice. This research gap is important because this practice differs from conventional live commerce. In live commerce, sellers control the selling environment, whereas in donation alerts, business messages enter communication spaces owned and managed by creators through participatory platform mechanisms. This difference in ownership creates communicative consequences that have received limited scholarly attention. Advertisers are not only required to construct informative messages but must also negotiate the appropriateness of their presence within a space they do not own. Based on de Certeau's framework [13], this practice can be understood as a tactic: the utilization of opportunities within structures that are not controlled by the actor, in contrast to strategies implemented from positions of ownership and authority.

This study proposes the concept of platform-mediated promotional visibility to explain this phenomenon. The concept refers to paid and short-duration access to accumulated attention within a third-party channel, obtained through platform features that are not originally designed as advertising channels. In this process, basic visibility is transactional, while further amplification is relational and contingent.

The concept consists of four dimensions. First, purchasability: basic visibility is obtained through financial transactions rather than negotiation or editorial selection. Second, channel non-ownership: the communication space belongs to the creator rather than the advertiser. Third, temporariness: exposure occurs within seconds and does not create a persistent trace that can easily be revisited by audiences. Fourth, contingent amplification: additional attention through creator responses, reading, or interaction is not included within the transaction and cannot be guaranteed.

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This concept differs from three related practices. Unlike sponsorship, there is no negotiated agreement between advertisers and creators, and creators do not provide prior approval of the displayed messages. Unlike paid platform advertising, there is no advertising system that targets, verifies, or moderates the messages, and there is no advertising disclosure mechanism. Unlike live commerce, the communication space is not controlled by sellers; therefore, advertisers must adapt to existing community norms rather than establish them. The combination of these four dimensions and three distinctions constitutes the conceptual contribution of this study.

Based on this research gap, this study examines how promotional messages representing business actors are constructed through donation alerts in Marapthon: The Last Tale. Specifically, this study addresses three research questions.

First, how are promotional messages constructed through donation alerts in terms of message structure, communication style, and call-to-action strategies?

Second, what communicative strategies are used by businesses to gain visibility within creator-owned live streaming spaces?, Third, how does donation-based visibility differ from conventional advertising, sponsorship, and live commerce practices?

METHOD

This study adopts a constructivist-interpretive paradigm using qualitative content analysis with a hybrid deductive–inductive approach. This paradigm is selected because promotional messages are understood as communication constructions whose meanings are shaped by language, context, and platform environments. Qualitative content analysis enables systematic categorization of communication data while preserving contextual interpretation [14], [15]. Descriptive frequencies and percentages are reported only to map the characteristics of the corpus and do not represent statistical inference beyond the observed data.

The observation universe consists of the 101-day implementation period of Marapthon: The Last Tale. The program adopts a subathon format, namely a longduration live streaming event controlled by a timer mechanism, where the streaming duration increases whenever viewers provide support through subscriptions or donations. The donation feature was active only during the early period of the event and was disabled after day 46. However, publicly available recordings on the organizer's YouTube channel were only available until day 45. The accessible corpus consists of 30 recorded videos with approximately 8–10 hours of duration each.

This study applies purposive sampling based on temporal contrast by selecting two videos: day 1 and day 45. Day 45 represents the final available broadcast containing donation alerts before the feature was disabled. Day 1 was selected because it represents the initial period when audience attention and promotional experimentation were emerging. Day 45 was selected because it represents the final accessible period before

donation functionality was discontinued. The contrast enables comparison between

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earlystage and mature-stage promotional adaptation.

The selected videos provide approximately 17 hours of observation. The selection of cases follows qualitative research principles, where samples are selected based on analytical relevance rather than statistical representativeness.

From the two selected videos, 243 promotional donation alerts were identified, consisting of 53 messages from day 1 and 190 messages from day 45. These messages constitute the analytical corpus. The unit of analysis is one donation alert as a complete communication artifact, including the sender name and message text displayed simultaneously on screen. This approach reflects how audiences encounter donation alerts as a unified visual communication unit. The sender-name field is also considered important because it may function as a space for brand placement. Therefore, brand identification through sender names is included in the analysis.

A promotional message is operationally defined as a message used to promote goods or services that contains at least a brand or business identity, either within the sendername field or the message text. This definition follows the understanding of marketing communication as a process of informing, persuading, and reminding consumers about products and brands [16]. Brand identification is also related to digital brand equity formation, where recognition and association contribute to brand value development [10].

Local business in this study refers to business entities operating in Indonesia and offering products or services to Indonesian markets. This definition is geographical and operational rather than based on business size. Therefore, local business does not automatically refer only to micro, small, and medium enterprises. The study also records boundary cases, including national brands, licensed franchises, entities operating outside Indonesia, and messages promoting creators rather than commercial products. These cases are retained because they demonstrate that donation alerts can function not only as business promotion mechanisms but also as tools for audience exchange between creators.

Data were collected through non-participant digital observation and documentation. Eligible messages were transcribed and recorded together with unit codes, video sources, and timestamps. Screenshots were stored as an audit trail. Donation amounts, display duration, and whether messages were read or responded to by the streamer were recorded as contextual metadata to support interpretation of attention-based communication dynamics rather than as message-content categories.

The coding process follows a research codebook consisting of four deductive categories and one inductive category. The first category, message structure (MS), includes brand identification, product or service identification, value proposition, transaction information, and purchase-access information. These categories correspond with advertising information cues, including product, quality, price, special offers, availability, and access information [17].

The second category, communication style (CS), identifies informational,

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transformational, conversational, professional, and humorous approaches. These categories are based on advertising message strategy research and the concept of conversational human voice [9], [18].

The third category, call to action (CTA), examines both the existence and target of audience actions. CTA types are categorized as explicit, implicit, or absent, while action targets include purchasing, contacting, visiting physical locations, and digital engagement. This classification follows the distinction between direct and indirect directive communication acts [19].

The fourth category, attention-seeking strategy (AS), identifies strategies used to increase message salience, including direct greetings, urgency or scarcity appeals, verbal repetition, and rhetorical questions.

During coding, repeated patterns not covered by deductive categories were identified through inductive analysis. These patterns were consolidated into the category legitimation work (L), referring to verbal strategies used by businesses to gain social acceptance when entering communication spaces owned by creators. This category includes permission requests, solidarity appeals, prayers or goodwill expressions, and representations of family-based or newly established businesses.

Table 1. Examples of Coding Application

Example Message Characteristics	Category Coding	Code
Business name or brand identity displayed in sender Message name / message	message structure	MS1 Brand identification
Product or service description structure	message structure	MS2 Product/service identification
Discount, price, or special offer information	message structure	MS4 Transaction information
Invitation to follow Instagram, visit website, or contact seller	Call-to-Action	CTA Digital engagement
Request for support, prayers, or acceptance from viewers	Legitimation work	L1-L4

(source:)

To improve coding transparency, several examples of message classification are provided. A donation alert containing a business name followed by product information was coded as brand identification (MS1) and product/service identification (MS2). Messages containing invitations to visit social media accounts or online stores were categorized as digital engagement calls-to-action (CTA). Messages that included expressions such as requests for support, prayers, or appeals for community acceptance

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were coded as legitimation work (L).

Coding was conducted independently by two researchers using the same codebook. Inter-coder reliability was assessed using a randomly selected 20% subsample of the corpus (49 units) before full coding. Reliability was calculated for each dimension because interpretive categories may produce different agreement levels compared with categories based on explicit textual indicators [2]. The subsample maintained proportional representation from both observation periods.

Table 2. Inter-Coder Reliability on the Subsample (n = 49)

Dimension	Agreement (%)	Cohen's k	Notes
Message structure (MS1– MS5)	93.9	0.88	High agreement; differences mainly occurred in distinguishing product attributes (MS3) and transaction information (MS4).
Communication style (CS1–CS5)	89.8	0.82	Good agreement; minor differences occurred in interpreting transformational/emotional and conversational styles.
Call to action – presence	95.9	0.92	Very high agreement; disagreement was mainly between implicit and absent calls-to-action.
Call to action – target	91.8	0.86	High agreement; differences occurred in distinguishing digital engagement from purchase-oriented actions.
Attention-seeking (AS1–AS4)	85.7	0.78	Good agreement; interpretation differences occurred in identifying personal relevance and rhetorical strategies.
Legitimation work (L1–L4)	87.8	0.80	Good agreement; differences occurred in identifying solidarity appeals and goodwill expressions.

(Source: author's analysis.)

Disagreements were resolved through consensus coding, where both researchers discussed differences until agreement was reached. Cohen's kappa values ranged from 0.78 to 0.92, indicating substantial to almost perfect agreement. Additional coding rules were added to the codebook to improve consistency and replicability. All transcripts, timestamps, screenshots, coding decisions, and analytical notes were maintained as an audit trail [2].

This study follows principles of digital research ethics [20]. Data were obtained from

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publicly available content without direct interaction with users. Data minimization principles were applied through explicit anonymization rules.

Brand and business names were retained because they were intentionally published as part of commercial activities and are central to the research object. However, personal phone numbers, WhatsApp numbers, personal names unrelated to business identities, and private accounts were anonymized in reporting and supplementary coding files. Creator and organizer identities were retained because they are public information directly connected to the research object.

Messages indicating potentially problematic activities were retained because they are relevant for governance analysis. However, identifying details that could function as promotional access information were masked to prevent the research from unintentionally becoming a distribution channel.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study analyzed 243 promotional donation alerts from Marapthon: The Last Tale, consisting of 53 messages from day 1 and 190 messages from day 45. The findings indicate that donation alerts function beyond financial support mechanisms for creators. These features are appropriated by businesses as promotional communication spaces where they obtain temporary visibility within creator-owned live streaming environments.

Promotional Visibility and Business Characteristics

The businesses identified in the corpus were primarily consumer-oriented. Food and beverage businesses represented the largest sector (33.7%), followed by fashion and accessories (15.6%). This indicates that donation alerts are mainly utilized by businesses targeting final consumers, particularly businesses with relatively small transaction values. Geographically, 103 messages (42.4%) contained explicit location markers covering 58 different locations, including both major cities and smaller regions in Indonesia. This finding demonstrates a separation between operational reach and communication reach. Businesses remain territorially embedded because their services depend on physical locations, but donation alerts allow their promotional messages to reach nationally distributed audiences.

Table 3. Distribution of Business Sectors in the Corpus

Sector	n	%	Description
Food & beverage	82	33.7	—
Fashion & accessories	38	15.6	—
Professional services, finance & construction	25	10.3	—
Entertainment, hobbies, crafts & games	20	8.2	—

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Health & beauty	20	8.2	—
Automotive & transportation	18	7.4	—
Gadgets, electronics & services	15	6.2	—
Creator accounts/content	12	4.9	Special inclusion sub-category
Vape & tobacco	5	2.1	—
Household services & rental	4	1.6	—
Education & training	2	0.8	—
Others	2	0.8	Including 1 suspected illegal unit
Total	243	100,0	—

(Source: author's analysis.)

This finding reflects the broader transformation of digital marketing practices among Indonesian businesses, particularly small and medium enterprises that increasingly utilize digital platforms to overcome limitations in conventional promotion. Previous studies in Indonesia have shown that digital marketing and social media utilization allow UMKM actors to improve brand visibility, expand market communication, and establish stronger interactions with potential consumers despite geographical limitations [21], [22]. Therefore, the use of donation alerts can be understood as an extension of digital promotional practices, where businesses utilize an existing digital community rather than relying solely on owned promotional channels.

In this context, donation alerts represent a distinctive form of promotional visibility. Unlike conventional digital advertising systems where businesses purchase targeted advertisements through platform-managed mechanisms, donation alerts provide access to an existing audience gathered around a creator. The mechanism enables businesses with limited market reach to participate in broader communication networks. This characteristic is consistent with the development of digital entrepreneurship, where entrepreneurs increasingly utilize existing digital infrastructures to create new forms of market interaction and value creation [12].

Table 4. Corpus Characteristics and Promotional Donation Values

Indicator	Day 1	Day 45	Total
Number of promotional messages	53	190	243
Total donation value (IDR)	16,571,000	4,356,000	20,927,000
Median (IDR)	10,000	10,000	10,000
Quartile 1–Quartile 3 (IDR)	10,000–15,000	10,000–10,000	10,000–10,000
Maximum value (IDR)	6,100,000	1,000,000	6,100,000

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Messages with IDR 10,000 amounts	39 (73.6%)	169 (88.9%)	208 (85.6%)
Messages > IDR 500,000	6 (11.3%)	2 (1.1%)	8 (3.3%)
Contribution of the 6 largest messages	95.1% of total	51.7% of total	—
Total excluding messages > IDR 500,000 (IDR)	815,000	2,356,000	3,171,000

(Source: author's analysis.)

The mechanism represents platform-mediated promotional visibility, where territorial limitations remain in business operations but no longer fully restrict communication visibility. Therefore, donation alerts provide access to broader attention networks even when service availability remains local [13].

Message Structure and Communication Style

The structure of promotional messages shows strong compression due to limited display duration. Product or service identification appeared in 91.8% of messages, while access or purchase information appeared in 85.6%. However, only 27.2% included product benefits or lue propositions, and only 17.7% contained price or promotional information.

This indicates that donation alerts prioritize three basic elements: business identity, offered product/service, and access information. In a limited attention environment, businesses prioritize recognition and discoverability rather than detailed persuasion.

Table 5. Distribution of Message Structure Categories

Code	n total	% total	% Day 1	% Day 45	Temporal Pattern
MS1 Brand / business identification	243	100,0	100,0	100,0	Inclusion Criteria
MS2 Product/service identification	223	91,8	79,2	95,3	Increase
MS3 Value proposition/product attributes	66	27,2	18,9	29,5	Increase
MS4 Transaction information and offers	43	17,7	5,7	21,1	Increase
MS5 Access/purchase information	208	85,6	64,2	91,6	Increase

(Source: author's analysis. A single message may receive more than one code.)

This pattern is consistent with digital marketing practices among Indonesian UMKM, where promotional communication through social media often emphasizes

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concise information, visual recognition, and direct access channels. Research on Indonesian digital marketing strategies shows that effective social media communication requires content that is easily understood, interactive, and capable of building awareness within a limited attention environment [22]. Thus, the dominance of brand identification and product information in donation alerts indicates adaptation to the characteristics of live streaming communication.

Table 6. Distribution of Communication Style Categories

Code	n total	% total	% Day 1	% Day 45	Temporal Pattern
CS1 Informational/rational style	241	99,2	96,2	100,0	Increase
CS2 Transformational/emotional style	28	11,5	5,7	13,2	Increase
CS3 Conversational/informal style	170	70,0	67,9	70,5	stable
CS4 Formal/professional style	12	4,9	0,0	6,3	Increase
CS5 Humor style	7	2,9	1,9	3,2	stable

(Source: author's analysis. A single message may receive more than one code.)

The dominance of informational communication style (99.2%) and conversational style (70%) further demonstrates that businesses adjust their promotional messages to fit creator-based communities. Rather than using formal advertising language, businesses tend to adopt communication patterns closer to interpersonal interaction. This approach corresponds with the characteristics of social commerce, where trust and engagement are developed through social interaction rather than only through transactional communication [4].

Donation Value and Attention Economy

The total promotional donation value reached IDR 20.9 million, but the distribution was highly concentrated, where eight messages (3.3%) contributed 84.8% of the total value. Meanwhile, the median donation remained IDR 10,000, indicating that most promotional messages were generated through low-value contributions.

This pattern suggests that donation alerts serve different promotional purposes. High-value contributions may seek greater visibility and potential interaction from creators, while low-value contributions mainly provide basic exposure opportunities. Thus, the value of donation alerts is not determined only by financial contribution but also by access to audience attention.

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These findings support the attention economy perspective, where attention becomes a scarce resource in digital environments [5]. In Indonesia's digital business context, visibility and brand awareness are important outcomes of digital promotion, particularly for UMKM seeking broader market reach [21], [23]. Therefore, donation alerts function not merely as advertising placement but as access to an existing attention ecosystem shaped by relationships between creators and audiences.

Call-to-Action and Attention Strategy

Explicit calls-to-action appeared in 72% of messages. However, the dominant target was digital engagement (59.3%), such as following social media accounts or visiting online platforms, while direct purchase instructions appeared in only 26.7% of messages.

This finding suggests that donation alerts primarily function as traffic-transfer mechanisms rather than direct transaction spaces. Businesses use temporary exposure within creator communities to redirect audiences toward channels they control.

Table 7. Distribution of Call to Action

Panel A. Presence of Call-to-Action (mutually exclusive, n = 243)	n	%	% Day 1	% Day 45
Explicit/direct	175	72,0	49,1	78,4
Implicit	41	16,9	15,1	17,4
No call-to-action	27	11,1	35,8	4,2
Panel B. Action Target (multi-code, n = 243)	**n**	**%**	**% Day 1**	**% Day 45**
Social/digital action	144	59,3	41,5	64,2
Purchase/order	65	26,7	32,1	25,3
Physical visit	57	23,5	15,1	25,8
Contact/inquiry	37	15,2	13,2	15,8
No identifiable target	37	15,2	—	—

Source: author's analysis. Panel B percentages are calculated based on the entire corpus (n = 243). Of the 216 messages containing calls-to-action, 10 messages contained calls-to-action without specifically identifiable targets; therefore, the number of messages without identifiable targets (37) is higher than the number of messages without calls-to-action (27).

This pattern is similar to digital marketing strategies used by Indonesian UMKM, where social media platforms frequently function as awareness and engagement channels before consumers complete transactions through other platforms such as marketplaces, websites, or messaging applications [21], [23]. Therefore, donation alerts should not be interpreted as replacement for conventional commerce platforms but as an additional communication layer within the customer journey.

The most common attention strategy was direct greeting or personal relevance (53.1%). Conventional advertising techniques such as urgency, repetition, and rhetorical questions appeared rarely. This indicates that businesses rely more on social connection

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with creators and communities than on traditional advertising persuasion.

Such findings strengthen previous research showing that engagement in live streaming environments is strongly influenced by interaction, trust, and perceived social connection between creators and audiences [4]. In creator-based environments, promotional effectiveness is therefore influenced not only by message content but also by the ability of businesses to communicate appropriately within existing community norms.

Legitimation Work in Creator-Owned Spaces

A key finding was the emergence of legitimation work, identified in 26.7% of messages. This category includes permission requests, solidarity appeals, prayers, and representations of family or newly established businesses. Unlike conventional advertising, these messages do not only communicate products but also negotiate acceptance within spaces owned by creators. Expressions requesting permission or support demonstrate that businesses recognize their position as external actors entering an established community environment.

Table 8. Distribution of Attention-Seeking Strategy and Legitimation Work

Kategori	n	%	% Day 1	% Day 45
AS1 Direct greeting/personal relevance	129	53,1	47,2	54,7
AS2 Urgency/scarcity	5	2,1	0,0	2,6
AS3 Verbal repetition	9	3,7	0,0	4,7
AS4 Rhetorical question	9	3,7	3,8	3,7
L1 Permission/deference request	21	8,6	—	—
L2 Solidarity appeal	33	13,6	—	—
L3 Prayer/good wishes	14	5,8	—	—
L4 Family/new business framing	13	5,3	—	—
Legitimation work (min. one sub-code)	65	26,7	34,0	24,7
Without AS or L	89	36,6	—	—

Source: author's analysis. A single message may receive more than one code.

This finding is particularly relevant in the Indonesian digital communication context, where trust and relational interaction often influence consumer acceptance of online promotional messages. Studies on digital marketing among Indonesian UMKM emphasize that authenticity, interaction, and relationship-building are important elements in strengthening consumer trust and engagement [22]

Therefore, legitimation work illustrates that promotional communication in creator-owned spaces requires more than presenting commercial information. Businesses must also construct social legitimacy to avoid being perceived merely as external advertisers. This extends the understanding of platform-mediated visibility by showing that access to attention does not automatically result in acceptance.

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From Paid Visibility to Interactional Amplification

The findings reveal two layers of visibility. The first is baseline visibility, obtained automatically through financial contribution and resulting in temporary screen exposure. The second is interactional amplification, which occurs when creators read, respond, or interact with messages.

Streamer responses occurred in only 3.7% of messages. Although several highvalue donations received responses, financial contribution alone did not guarantee amplification. Therefore, donation alerts demonstrate that visibility can be purchased, but meaningful attention remains relational and contingent.

This finding expands previous studies on live streaming by demonstrating that creator monetization features can be appropriated as promotional tools by businesses. However, the transformation from visibility into meaningful communication depends on social relationships, creator decisions, and audience acceptance.

Governance Implications and Theoretical Contribution

The use of donation alerts as promotional channels creates governance challenges. None of the analyzed messages contained advertising disclosures, meaning commercial messages appeared within a format commonly associated with voluntary audience support.

The absence of disclosure raises questions regarding audience recognition of commercial intent. Previous research on native advertising demonstrates that disclosure practices influence how audiences identify and evaluate persuasive communication [11]. Similar concerns may emerge in donation-based promotional practices because the boundary between audience support and commercial promotion becomes less explicit.

Additionally, donation alerts lack some verification and moderation mechanisms commonly found in formal advertising systems. This creates potential reputational risks for creators because promotional messages appear within their channels without prior approval.

From a digital entrepreneurship perspective, donation alerts represent innovation through platform appropriation, where existing participatory features are repurposed into promotional infrastructure [12]. This mechanism combines creator monetization, audience participation, and business promotion into a hybrid communication practice.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that donation alerts in Marapthon: The Last Tale function not only as mechanisms of financial support for creators but also as promotional communication spaces utilized by businesses. Analysis of 243 promotional messages shows that limited display time encourages concise and functional communication, emphasizing brand identity, product/service information, and access channels, while value propositions and pricing information appear less frequently. Promotional messages

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combine informational content with community-oriented conversational styles, and most calls-to-action direct audiences toward business-owned digital channels rather than immediate transactions.

Two findings provide the main theoretical contributions. First, legitimation work including permission requests, solidarity appeals, and goodwill expressions appears in 26.7% of messages. This reflects the need for businesses to negotiate social acceptance when entering creator-owned communication spaces. Second, 36.6% of messages rely only on paid exposure without additional rhetorical strategies, indicating that visibility itself becomes the primary value obtained through donation alerts.

Donation value analysis reveals strong concentration: eight messages (3.3%) contributed 84.8% of total donations, while the median contribution remained IDR 10,000. This indicates two promotional regimes within the same mechanism: high-value contributions seeking potential creator amplification and low-value contributions seeking basic visibility. Since streamer responses occurred in only 3.7% of messages, the findings show that visibility can be purchased, but meaningful attention remains relational and uncertain.

The study introduces the concept of platform-mediated promotional visibility, defined as temporary paid access to accumulated attention within third-party creator channels through platform features not originally designed as advertising mechanisms. This concept extends existing platform visibility research by highlighting a form of visibility obtained through another actor's communication space rather than through owned channels or algorithmic distribution.

From a digital entrepreneurship perspective, donation alerts represent innovation through platform appropriation, where existing participatory features are repurposed as promotional infrastructure. This mechanism allows geographically limited businesses to achieve broader communication reach, although service accessibility remains territorially constrained.

Practically, businesses using donation alerts should prioritize clear brand identity, concise product information, accessible digital channels, and specific calls-to-action. Meanwhile, creators and platforms should establish clearer boundaries between community monetization and commercial promotion, particularly regarding disclosure, moderation, and reputational responsibility.

Future research should examine broader datasets across multiple creators and platforms, combining content analysis with interviews, engagement metrics, or sales data to evaluate the relationship between visibility, attention, and promotional effectiveness. Comparative studies between donation alerts, live commerce, and sponsorship may further clarify how digital attention is transformed into communication and economic value.

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