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Reframing Livestream Marketing: A Netnographic Exploration of Two-Way Communication in TikTok Livestream Agribusiness.

Dimas Naufal Maulana Akbar[1*], Kukuh Lukiyanto [2]
[1,2] *Entrepreneurship Department, BINUS Business School Undergraduate Program, Bina Nusantara University, Jakarta 11480, Indonesia*
**Corresponding Author: dimas.akbar001@binus.ac.id*

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Live streaming has emerged as a major focus of online marketing, principally in applications such as TikTok. The bulk of existing literature, though, focuses on consumer involvement, neglecting the likelihood that these apps can be used as informal links between country businesses and their suppliers.

Objectives: In this project, it will consider the 2-way communication that takes place in the Indonesian livestock feed company TikTok livestreams by the name Kabul Miarso. To be specific, it captures the way rural viewers can send raw materials in real-time broadcasting, in essence, putting themselves in the position of potential suppliers, instead of being consumers.

Methods: The qualitative netnographic approach was adopted to follow the three months of livestream materials. Thematic coding was used to analyze a purposively selected subset of 25 unrequested chat interactions that were screenshot across the offering type, language patterns, and communicative intent.

Results: The results indicate that TikTok Live is more than a marketing tool; it will become a place where organic contact between suppliers can develop. Rural sellers also listed products including bran, corn and rice derivative, and put their propositions in terms that localized them and in a manner that specified transactions. The three major themes that appeared are that it was a case of user-initiated supply, the aspect of negotiation cues, and the idea of livestream as micro-marketplace.

Conclusions: This paper envisions livestream marketing as a two-way communication medium which facilitates grassroots trade. It contributes to the e-Marketing and netnography discourses of participation by exerting how rural players reuse the digital realm to initiate informal B2B communications, disrupting the established marketing premises.

Keywords: Netnography, Digital Marketing, TikTok, Live Streaming, Agribusiness.

INTRODUCTION

The livestock feed business is significant in the success and viability of the agricultural industry, but it continues to encounter insects in production performance, distribution, and serviceability of products [1]. Indonesia, as an example, has experienced a large growth in national production of feed since 2011 which started at 11.3 million tons to 21.7 million tons by 2020. Nevertheless, conventional supply chains are ineffective as they engage various middlemen who increase the cost of distribution and reduce the quality of products [2]. Also, the restriction to live information about the market, including price and stocks levels impedes the capacity of farmers to make intelligent buying choices [3]. To counter these limitations, digitalization in the marketing channels has been adopted as a strategic lever in reorganizing value chains in the agribusiness [1].

As a result of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, digital marketing has become more active in transforming the value chains of agribusiness globally [4]. The agricultural and livestock industries used to trail in terms of technological

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adoption, but they are now going through a significant period of change; in 2021, the global spend on digital agriculture technologies was around USD 51 billion, indicating a fast increase in the pace of technology adoption in the agrifood industry [3]. Digital marketing tools, including social media, websites, and e-commerce sites, allow the producers to acquire the customers more effectively and cheaper than in the traditional channels [2]. Digital marketing has become increasingly popular among young farmers, and such a trend has been stimulated by supportive training services, governmental schemes to promote digitalization in rural areas [3], [5].

Digital marketing used in the livestock feed industry ensures that there are a number of benefits along the entire supply chain. E-commerce allows producers not to use intermediaries but create direct relationships with farmers which allows to reduce costs and maintain the integrity of products. Moreover, the digital marketing allows real-time and transparent flows of information about product specifications, prices, and availability, which helps farmers to make rational and timely decisions to make purchases. As empirical evidence in China shows, small-scale poultry farmers who promoted their products through online platforms received high prices due to the increased trustworthiness associated with an elaborate description of products and reviews by consumers (Li et al., 2023). Finally, the digitalization of feed marketing can achieve a more productive, inclusive, and sustainable agribusiness ecosystem [1], [2], [5].

Even though all these are some of the benefits associated with the use of digital marketing in livestock feeds, structural limitations still limit the adoption of this form of marketing. The access of farmers to online platforms is limited by the reasons related to the insufficient infrastructure in rural areas [3]. Socioeconomic conditions such as income level, education level, possession of devices, and access to the internet play an important role in raising awareness and adoption rates. Conventional farmers with low digital literacy, in addition to fears about the quality of products and safety of transactions, has resulted in the development of distrust towards the online marketing models [4]. Based on empirical evidence, the adoption is strongly dependent on two constructs of Technology Acceptance Model (TAM): perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness of technology. As a result, it will be necessary to design digital platforms that are easy to use and can deliver quantifiable values, which will increase the rate of adaptation in day-to-day marketing activities.

The need to conduct this study can be illustrated by the increasing pace of the sector towards digital marketing. Whereas the wider agricultural literature has recorded the change that is already taking place in the agricultural sector, there has been a smaller contribution of the literature that dwells on the digital tactics in the marketing of livestock feeds. New strategies of the top companies taking steps to introduce their own e-commerce websites, among others, are indicators of the gradual loss of the usual marketing paradigms [1]. However, there is little empirical evidence of the contextual and practical barriers associated with the application of digital marketing in livestock feed. Therefore, the current paper is intended to fill this research gap and review the current strategies, evaluate distribution and sales indicators, and develop suggestions to streamline the digital marketing of this vital industry.

OBJECTIVES

This paper discusses the various changes in the role of digital marketing in the livestock feed market by considering a more in-depth netnographic analysis of the Tik Tok livestream practices used by the agribusiness players in Indonesia. The case study focuses on Kabul Miarso, an organisation that deals with the production and supply of livestock food, utilising TikTok livestreaming as its direct-to-consumer sales channel. The study examines the way, although such livestreams were largely meant to advertise the sale of finished goods, they led to unexpected upstream contacts, including unsolicited supply bids by rural farmers. Such results contrast with the traditional expectations of marketing whereby only the inquiring, or interest in a purchase, feedback could have been received. Catching and exploring these two-way communicative interactions, the paper aims to shed light on the possibility of community-driven marketing in agribusiness ecosystems, which facilitated by digital means.

This research has three objects. To begin with, it studies the mechanisms and content strategy used in TikTok livestreaming as a digital marketing strategy in the livestock feed industry. Second, it assesses the development and consequences of reverse communication patterns- i.e., farmers providing raw materials to the feed producer in the livestream sessions. Third, the test evaluates the efficiency and constraints of livestreaming as an online marketing instrument in agribusiness environments within rural areas in light of the infrastructure, trust, and community

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connectivity issues mentioned earlier in the literature on online digitalization of agriculture [3]. In this light, the study is part of the emerging research on co-creation, user involvement and interactive marketing in technologically marginalised areas.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Hasibuan and Sopiah (2021) performed a literature-based study that examined the impact of the work-from-home (WFH) arrangement on the employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. In their study in Indonesia, it was emphasized that a positive work-life balance (WLB) is essential to continue employee performance under an arrangement of remote working. The authors indicated that working flexibility and programs aimed at enhancing job satisfaction(which are the main elements of WLB) might be used to reinforce self-control and productivity of the employees, by extension enhancing the performance of the WFH workers [6]. The results indicate that the businesses need to adoptpolicies like flexible schedule to enhance both WLB and output of employees when they are at houses.

Shirmohammadi et al. (2022) summarized the results of empirical studies on remote work in order to evaluate its effect on WLB in the pandemic. Performing a study analysis of 40 articles, they founda discrepancy between the idealistic expectations and actual results of WFH. As an example, the flexible schedules that remote work promised tended to have a downside in that it resulted in working longeror more intensely, as well as a home office (flexplace) tending to have insufficient workspace and distractions. Excessive reliance ontechnology also brought about technostress and aloneness, working at homeadded to household and care giving work thus contradicting factor of beingfamily friendly. As a reaction, Shirmohammadi et al. highlight the importance of HR development as a way of helping the employees to correct their expectation of the reality by, e.g., offering training and resources to facilitate the management of time needs, tech stress reduction, and the definition of a clear boundary between work and home [7]. These precautions guarantee the positive consequences of remote work are achieved without affecting wellbeing.

Deole et al. (2022) presented the quantitative data regarding WFH and employeeperformance by using the evidence of the UK. Their analysis revealed thatincreases in frequency of WFH were related to high self-rated productivity of the employees. To put it another way, individuals who telecommuted had the tendency to report that they did more work in less time, which means an increase in performance. The researchers noticed that such effects depended on situations, however. Under strict COVID-19 lockdowns (when schools and offices were closed), the productivity benefits that accompanied WFH were switched with reductions. This conclusion implies that remote-work benefits may be counterbalanced by the presence of extraneous stressors and distractions during lockdown: for instance, homeschoolingchildren. Those employees who had young children at home had lower productivity growth, which can be considered as related to taking care of children and making them go to school during working time. Accordingly, the research reveals that WFH has the potential to enhance performance in normal situations but needs accompaniment, e.g., childcare or a specific work area, when individual and environmental issues emerge [8].

The positive association between remote work, WLB, and job outcomes was strengthened by a large cross-country survey done by Oreškovic et al. (2023). The survey covering seven countries and almost 4,500 participants has revealed that the people working at home had much more WLB and job satisfaction than those who worked on-site. It is worth noting that 78 % of work-at-home employees responded that they would prefer to work at home in the future, which means that it is universally beneficial. The authors described the most major benefits: time savings on commuting, additional time at their disposal, and increasing time with their families. These aspects led to an improved daily balance thus enhancing wellbeing and concentration. In short, the research conducted by Oreškovic et al. (2023) proves that, when adequately supported, the WFH would improve quality of life and satisfaction, which plays a crucial role in performance and retention [9].

Later, Al Mohamed et al. (2024) explored the effects of WFH in thefinance industry and found that remote working indeed affects productivity and performance positively due to its effect on WLB. Their study offinancial professionals in Syria depicts that switching to a WFH setup made the first statistically major changes in the WLB of employees, accompanied by improved job satisfaction and motivation. In turn, these WLB improvements completely mediated the performance advantages of remote work, which indicated that the performance advantages were conditional on enhanced balance. As WLB improved, the productivity of the employees increased, and their job performancerose, respectively [10]. The findings underscore the need to facilitate WLB by undertaking initiatives like telework

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scheduling flexibility, ergonomic office arrangements at home, and workload balance to reveal remote work performance dividends.

METHODS

Methodology used in this research will be qualitative and descriptive based on the netnography framework that allows specifically analysing social interaction over the Internet and digital communities [11]. The case under investigation is a phenomenon that developed in Tik Tok livestream organized by one of the livestock-feed companies in Indonesia called Kabul Miarso. In April-June 2021 (three months), the researcher monitored the passive observation of live interaction sequences during marketing sessions and captured examples of them as screenshots. These screenshots were approached as text data, which can be subjected to a thematic analysis as a common qualitative research approach to the discovery and identification of patterned significance within the data [12]. It was carefully organised in an excel sheet in the raw form of data where each interaction was allocated an individual row. Columns used in assigning the attribution entailed date, screenshot link, alias of the participant, and content of the message, whereas analytical dimensions; type of data, initial meaning, collating, coding, theming, and interpreting were embedded in the matrix. The record of this sort corresponds to best qualitative research practices, as it facilitates transparency and rigour of analyses [13]. A purposive-sampling design produced 25 unsolicited offers of products that are forwarded by farmers and upstream providers, with each offer evaluated based on its commensuracy to the research goals.

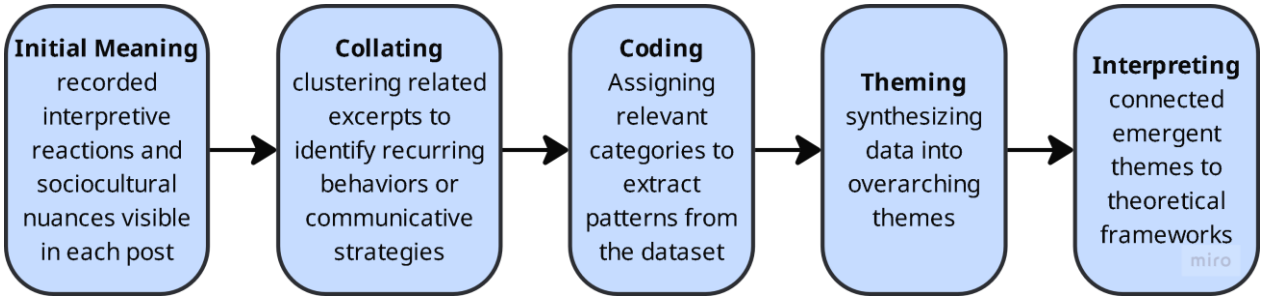

Figure 1. Data analysis workflow

The study followed a content analysis framework, which involves systematically organizing and interpreting textual data to reveal underlying themes [14]. In the first phase, the researcher engaged in familiarization by reviewing all data entries and noting initial impressions. This was followed by open coding, where each chat message was segmented and annotated with inductively derived codes that represented core ideas or intentions. Codes were then grouped into categories that captured shared meanings and communication patterns.

The open coding process was conducted iteratively, with a focus on staying close to the participants' voices and intentions. Using inductive logic, the researcher avoided applying any preexisting categories, instead letting themes emerge organically from the data [12]. Codes were refined and merged into higher-order categories when patterns or similarities were detected. This stage was documented meticulously using analytical memos, which helped track the researcher's thought process and decisions throughout the coding journey [15].

Next, themes were constructed by identifying consistent patterns across coded data. The research followed the six-phase process of thematic analysis developed by Braun and Clarke (2021), which includes familiarization, coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up. Each potential theme was reviewed in relation to the entire dataset and supported by representative quotes. This iterative validation ensured internal consistency and meaningful conceptual structure.

To strengthen trustworthiness and credibility, multiple validation techniques were applied. A reflective journal was maintained throughout the coding process to enhance transparency and minimize researcher bias [13]. Moreover, the study applied an audit trail approach, recording all decisions and changes in coding structures. This process helped establish methodological dependability and confirmability, key quality criteria in qualitative inquiry.

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Overall, the application of netnography in this study provided a structured yet flexible framework for exploring TikTok-based interactions in a rural agribusiness context. By combining rigorous documentation, inductive coding, and digital ethnographic insight, the research uncovers an emergent form of community-driven, two-way marketing in a digital environment. The methodology employed adheres to best practices outlined in recent qualitative social media research and contributes to the growing body of knowledge on netnographic approaches in livestream commerce.

FINDINGS

This study aims to use a content-analytic design to explore TikTok conversational interactions in a rural agribusiness context. The framework implements procedural mechanisms of textual material organisation and interpretation, hence, revealing underlying themes. In the first stage, the familiarisation with the dataset was achieved through the constant review and gathering of the first intuitions. After that, the open-coding approach was used, according to which the entries were separated and marked with conceptually based labels reflecting the actual or implied meaning of interlocutors. Then these provisional codes were grouped into categories of taxonomy that expressed a common meaning and recurrent patterns of communication.

Open coding was the main method of interpretation of data through iteration. Consistent with the inductive logic, early application of the superordinate categories was avoided, and traditional themes were permitted to crystallise out of the corpus of data [12]. The codes considered to be similar enough were gradually combined into higher-level configurations, and the process of refinement of such categories was strictly kept in analytic memos that track the path of the researchers in decision-making [15].

As coding was on-going, the researcher went on to develop themes by defining patterns which were repeated throughout coded sections. This action was in line with the six-step thematic analysis process formulated by Braun and Clarke (2021) that included familiarisation, coding, theme identification and extracting, theme review, defining and labelling, and the final thematic narrative construction. Each of the putative themes was also questioned in relation to the whole set of data and demonstrated by illustrative quotations. Internal consistency was strengthened, and conceptual architecture was a coherent one because such iterative validation was done.

A set of validation methods was used to enhance trustworthiness. To start with, it was a reflective journal where the reflexive notes were recorded, and they made the research more transparent and reduced researcher bias [13]. Second, a thorough audit trail was kept of all the decisions concerning coding and the consequent alterations. The research fulfilled these two standards of qualitative inquiry (dependability and confirmability) by retaining this documentation of the procedures.

Overall, the use of netnographic approach in the research provided a rigorous but flexible structure to question Tik Tok in rural agribusiness context. Covered by a highly structured documentation, inductive coding, and ethnographic sensitivity to digital space, the study sheds light to an emergent form of community-based, two-way marketing, which happens in digital space. The current approach to research also corresponds to the existing best practices in social media studies and complements the body of literature on netnography and livestream commerce.

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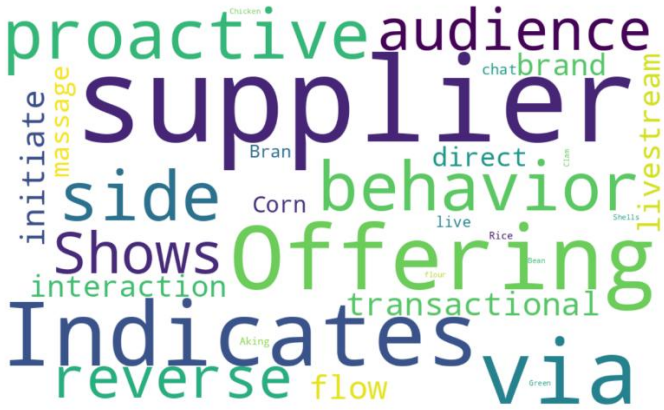

Figure 2. WordCloud

The current analysis focuses on an unforeseen trend in the TikTok live stream marketing performed by an influencer Kabul Miarso, in which the traditional one-way products advertisement has become a two-way supply portal. The netnographic observation resulted in recording 25 unsolicited offers by rural viewers thus giving the audience the capacity of supplying rather than being an end consumer. This shift signals the way bi-directional economic engagement in the context of rural agribusiness can be enabled through digital platforms namely livestreaming.

The results indicate that livestreaming sites like TikTok are not just tools of promotion, but of informal micro-marketplaces, allowing audience-made contributions to the supply chain. The rural contributors provided bran, corn, and rice derivatives to underline an organic shift of livestreaming to participatory commerce. Implying existing theories of co-creation, networked interaction and community-based commerce, the observed behaviours indicate that the innovative digital practices can develop out of nowhere even in technologically underserved areas.

The paper, based on a detailed netnographic approach, will not only make a conceptual and methodological contribution to research on livestream commerce and digital marketing but also help to improve rural economic inclusion. Not only does it reframe the very concept of the audience as not viewsbut possible collaborators, it also encourages agribusiness companies to appreciate livestreaming as an active relationship-building and supply-generating medium, instead of focusing on it as a means of making sales. Finally, the paper demonstrates that innovation in rural digital economies is not as much technology-driven, as the creativity of users, the situational adaptation, and the repurposing of platforms. In the further development of digital ecosystems, systematic study of emergent behaviours through the process of netnography is the important methodology that scholars and practitioners should adopt in their aim to create inclusive, responsive and participatory digital markets.

DISCUSSION

Findings from this paper proves that livestream marketing within TikTok has the potential to evolve into an interactive supply chain interface whereby audiences are not mere content consumers but proactive supply-side actors too. This conclusion makes traditional digital marketing frameworks challenging, as the traditional way to describe the viewers is to explain them as passive consumers or inquisitive customers of a product. This redesign of audiences as informal suppliers corresponds to the participatory commerce, where users perform as both participants of the market and value co-creators [16].

This phenomenon also corroborates the newly emerging research field, which emphasizes the livestream spaces as the venues of micro-engagements that can extend beyond the scopes of the traditional buyer-seller relationships [17]. Such interactions are also a demonstration of emergence of co creation in the digital commerce where individuals create value together in a reciprocal manner. In Kabul Miarso, the viewers provided raw materials like “corn, bekatul, and karak” without being asked, which showed some form of value anticipation and intent with one another.

The audience puts up two roles of promotional consumer and raw inputs provider which is also the practice of micro-transactional bottom-up negotiation that surpasses the conventional B2B and B2C boundaries. Similar results are

outlined in Dou [18], who record informal supply chain loops with the involvement of suppliers and consumers in the context of livestream-led agricultural marketing in China. Furthermore, the research supports the argument raised by Kozinets that netnography is especially apt to expose emergent digital forms of conduct that are socio-culturally deep-rooted and user-directed.

This study, using unobtrusive observation and interpretative coding, reveals a community-based process of procurement which works outside official e-commerce websites. Although generally in mainstream agribusiness, the hierarchical distribution networks are dominant, the logs can be naturally developed in the community-based logics, which the Kabul Miarso livestreams exemplify.

The results indicate that livestreaming can be transactional ecosystems, namely those that allow both engagement and supply creation [19]. On a higher level, the research leads to the discussion of informal digital B2B trading in developing economies. The rural users that may not have formal access to the digital supply chains reuse live chat functionality as micro-entry points into transactions. The practice reflects the argument by Zhao and Li (2021) on functionality hacking i.e., the recontextualization of platform tools by the user, which is typically seen in the rural digitalization process. In such contexts, comments on livestreams are regarded as the means of establishing the business relationships, informal price discovery, and logistics solution [20]. These are practices that indicate that the digital inclusion in agribusiness is not linear or institution-centric but improvisational.

The research also gives both the theoretical and practical implications. In theory, it questions assumptions concerning the platform functions and the role of the audience and asks scholars to reflect on the networked paradigm of interaction instead of understanding linear communication processes. In practice, livestream strategies can be reframed by agribusinesses making sure that they no longer act as a marketing tool only but also become participatory supply-chain interactions. Such livestreams as Kabul Miarso are marketplaces that are created by both a presenter and the audience equally.

IMPLICATION

The given work contributes to the study of livestream commerce by shifting the analytical focus away toward consumer activity and toward the interactivity of the supply element. Up to now, the majority of literature explores live commerce by using the lens of buyer motivation, trust building, or influencer performance [17]. However, the present study can be characterized by the view that audiences can also act upstream, thus interrupting the typical marketing funnel. The authors report on the rise of unsolicited requests by rural viewers, the advent of audience-sourced supply, an iterative kind of participatory commerce never theorized in either agribusiness or livestreaming literature.

The methodological contribution of the study is that it sharpens the netnography lens as an analytical approach to the research on rural economies. Kozinets (2020) relegates netnography primarily to branded consumer communities, but this paper shows that it also has a place in the study of emergent transactional practices within low-infrastructure, semi-formal contexts like rural TikTok livestreams. The paper, therefore, challenges researchers to reelect the nature of value co-creation and digital negotiation practice in the non-consumption-based ecosystems based on audiences as recipients of the products and whose contributions to the supply chain are potential.

Practical Implications

The results emphasize that livestreaming platforms may be used in two ways: they can not only be used as a source of revenue but also as an informal interface of sourcing. Thus, digital marketers and agribusiness entrepreneurs working in these fields can adjust their livestreaming activity with the incorporation of upstream signals in the form of an open call to raw materials or segment-oriented streams, which simultaneously involve buyers and suppliers. With the incorporation of such strategies, businesses such as Kabul Miarso will be able to utilize community-based supplies, reduce centralized purchasing, and develop an increased level of confidence in rural partners.

The informal B2B trading witnessed in the research also shows the importance of the balance of flexibility and responsiveness. Companies should be ready to react and respond to non-standard activities: raw material quotes,

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price requests, or local transportation proposals, therefore, the ability of a system to capture and answer those engagements could be the competitive advantage especially when local trust, proximity, and colloquial discussions play the leading role in market decision-making processes.

Policy Implications

The results indicate that platform developers and policymakers should consider livestreaming not only as a source of entertainment or retail infrastructure but also as a tool of inclusive economic involvement. Given a rural-interactive design it can be expected that TikTok and similar apps will become micro-marketplaces that encourage grassroots entrepreneurship and decentralised supply chains, thus enhancing bottom-up engagement in the digital economy.

LIMITATION & FUTURE RESEARCH

The current research has a number of limitations. The first limitation entails that the corpus is capped at twenty-five user interactions spanning a three-month period, thus, reducing the external validity of the results. Though the contextual richness was guaranteed in terms of purposive sampling, the size of the sample could be viewed as an under-representation of the behaviors in other sectors of the agribusiness, geographical location, or time. Future studies may use longitudinal netnography or cross-platform studies (YouTube Live, Shopee Live) to establish whether similar dynamic engagement patterns are present across digital ecosystems [21].

Second, the research is narrowed down to observable chat-based interactions without any backchannel communication or closed follow-ups (e.g., direct messaging after the livestream). The omission of such individual exchanges can stymie a comprehensive understanding of the buyer-supplier process because they can make the difference between engagement and successful transactions. Future research may also combine netnography with an interviewing approach or use platform analytics to follow the conversion pathway in its full scope [22].

Third, language and culture settings are some of the major factors that influence user behavior in livestream settings. A study that was done in a rural part of Indonesia cannot be generalized to other cities or even other countries beyond Indonesia because there are communicative rules that are used at the local level, such as vernacular expressions, honorifics, or communal trust. In turn, the sociolinguistic aspects of livestreaming, in particular, audience role-shifting, trust signaling, and economic negotiation, warrant further investigation [23].

Finally, netnography is interpretative in nature, even though it is useful in exposing latent interaction. Decisions about structural and methodological choices in selecting a researcher, and data sampling and analytical framing are likely to influence results. Future research may aim at collaborative or participatory netnography, when both researchers and community members co-interpret the collected data, validating emergent themes, and incorporating the properties of reflexivity and accountability in digital ethnography [24].

CONCLUSIION

The current study has explored an unexpected set-up of TikTok livestream marketing by Kabul Miarso where an initially developed allegedly one-way product promotion turned into an interactive supply surface. A netnographic approach showed how 25 unsolicited offers of supply unraveled in the rural audience that had been turned into the active participant position of the audience as opposed to the passive consumer position. The consequent change in direction of interaction shows how two-way economic involvement in the rural agribusiness scenario is possible using livestreaming platforms. The results indicate that livestream platforms like TikTok are not only promotional media but also an informal micro-market, which allows making contribution to the supply chain by the audience. Television viewers offered materials such as bran, corn and rice products and this was a natural evolution to participatory commerce. These practices support theories of co-creation, conduct through networks, and commerce grounded in community, which show that inventive digitality is also possible in technologically underserved contexts.

The way the entire netnography has been applied makes the study a significant contribution to the literature of livestream commerce and to research about rural economic inclusion. It repurposes the concept of the audience as potential partners and not the audience as the passive receivers of input and motivates agribusiness companies to think of livestreaming as not so much a sales tool but a way of building relationships and creating a supply source. Finally, the research proves that technological sophistication is not the only tool that encourages innovation in the

rural digital economies; it depends on user innovativeness, local contextualization, and platform re-use. With digital ecosystems ever-changing, the systemic scrutiny of these emergent behaviors via the use of netnography will prove to be an imperative of scholars and practitioners who are committed to evolving dynamic and inclusive, responsive, and participatory digital markets.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The raw data of this paper can be accessed on: https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/EZKW3S

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author has no conflict of interest.

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