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# ONLINE MARKETING STRATEGIES OF SEDEKAH ROMBONGAN

AGUS MAHARDIYANTO Universitas Jember Email: <u>agusmahardiyanto.feb@unej.ac.id</u>

> BAYU SUTIKNO Universitas Gadjah Mada Email: <u>bayusutikno@ugm.ac.id</u>

A PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLE (RECEIVED – 20<sup>TH</sup> FEB. 2022: REVISED – 30<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2022: ACCEPTED – 11<sup>TH</sup> SEPT. 2022)

# ABSTRACT

Sedekah Rombongan which moves online are able to raise funds from donors. Today many Indonesian people are connected to the internet. The number of internet users makes the internet a means of facilitating activities. Including giving charity is often done online. Sedekah rombongan which had been successful in collecting public funds for over 40 billion rupiahs through apps and online sites in Indonesia. The aim of this study was to analyze the Online Marketing Strategies of Sedekah Rombongan. This research emphasizes the strategy that is carried out by the Sedekah Rombongan so that it is able to convince donors to give sadaga. The data were collected through literature reviews, social media monitoring, in-depth interviews with the SR, and confirmation to the SR donors. Data analysis was performed by transcribing the interview, iterative reading, and analyzing these data in accordance with the requirements. Data analysis was conduct by triangulation by confirming the founders, several divisions and the donors of Sedekah Rombongan. The results of this study show that the most significantly affecting factor of SR's success was the strategy of photo sharing and narratives about the patients. Further in the ninth stage of the marketing cycle theory through social media it is mentioned that SR had carried out four stages i.e. Goal Setting, Instrument selections and Content of Message, Collaboration, and Sustainability. As for the other five stages which had not been done by SR were Listening, Defining Strategies, Target Identification Market, Establishing Community, and Monitoring. The one thing that was done by SR but not included in the theory is SR's Information Supply Flow Strategy.

Keywords: Sadaqa; Marketing; Social Media; Online; SR.

### INTRODUCTION

*Sedekah Rombongan* (henceforth SR) is a social movement that invites the public to online charity since 2011. Having its headquarter in Yogyakarta (a province in Indonesia) by couriers and volunteers scattered across Indonesia, they raise funds for donations online and offline with the support of the couriers and volunteers throughout Indonesia. SR focus is on assisting poor people with poor health condition.

Sedekah Rombongan is a social media-based social movement with its initial base in Yogyakarta-Indonesia. Founded on June 9, 2011 with its founders Saptuari Sugiarto, Sitaresmi (Saptuari's wife) and 6 of their friends represented through the Sedekah logo. A group of 8 ants.

Sedekah Rombongan started with Saptuari Sugiharto's initiation shortly after visiting and giving donations at the Sayap Ibu Foundation in the Seturan-Yogyakarta area. The Sayap Ibu Orphanage is an orphanage that voluntarily takes care of disabled babies who are victims of failed abortions whose whereabouts are not clear.

Sedekah Rombongan is a social movement that continues to grow on the island of Java and outside Java, it is noted that this movement is also found in Aceh, Sebatik Island (Kalimantan), Riau, Palembang, Jakarta, Surabaya, Bali, Bandung, Jember, Papua, etc. This movement continues to grow and expand with the vision of "Seeking face in front of God" the spirit that is instilled in the Sadaqa Group social movement is only to seek blessings from Allah SWT.

Sedekah Rombongan provide assistance in two ways. For the poor who can still be empowered even though they are poor and disabled, SR tries to empower them. As for the poor who have not had the time or cannot be empowered, the SR will provide compensation in the form of care and fulfillment of daily needs. Some of the poor who are the priority recipients of assistance from SR include: Orphanage children, orphans, old widows, poor people who are sick next are Islamic boarding schools, mosques and worship equipment (Al Qur'an, Sarong, Mukena, etc.).

Sedekah Rombongan, one of the agencies that focus on raising funds for *sadaqa, infaq,* and *waqf* online is the SR. SR is an *amil sadaqa* institution which establishes its primary donors online (Statute of SR/ Rule Of tumb Charity Organization delegation). SR explains that "SR *perse* is an independent movement through social media to help those in need" (Statute of SR, 2013). SR is different from LAZIS (*Amil Zakah* Institution/ Official Institutions of Zakah collecting in Indonesia) and BAZ (*Amil Zakah* Foundation/ Official Government Institutions of Zakah collecting in Indonesia) which are well-established or founded by leading figures in Indonesia. Such institutions are maintained by large organizations such as: LAZISNU, LAZISMU, *Rumah Zakat*, *Dompet Duafa*, PPA Darul Quran, Daarut Tauhid, LAZ BRI, BNI LAZ, LAZ Baituzzakah Pertamina. Quite different from SR, they establish a base of primary donors offline.

The amount of funds collected in SR reached 40 billion rupiahs in 2019 (SR, 2019). The amount of funds is still far from the potential of *zakah*, *infaq*, and *sadaqa* which amounted to 286 trillion rupiahs in 2016. There comes the need for online media use in order to increase the funds. A high gap between the potential and the amount of funds collected requires effective and efficient strategies in its collection. The use of online media in the collection of *sadaqa* is believed to be more effective in collecting *sadaqa* compared to the conventional charity boxes.

SR can survive with its self-sufficiency. As an independent social movement, SR can survive and continuously runs its online-based movement. SR managed to build trust with its donors, thus keeps the life of the community. Based on the above explanation, the formulation of the problem in this research was to identify the strategies undertaken by SR through online media.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

From the Islamic view of the property, every single possession that one owns is a treasure that belongs to Allah (*Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala*) while human partakes in taking care of the treasure in ways that do not violate the Islamic laws (Qaradawi, 2010). As the Words of Allah: "Believe in Allah and His Messenger and spend out of that in which He has made you successors. For those who have believed among you and spent, there will be a great reward." (57: 7). The verse gives clear guidance that the property does not belong to man, man only acts as a manager of the property that Allah has sent upon.

Islam prohibits its believers for extravagant affection towards treasures or considering that treasure is everything they need. Even though at some points, doing good deeds in Islam may require some amount of money, that does not mean that Islam makes money as a primary goal in life. Islam considers wealth as the only medium (wasilah) in achieving the blessing of Allah by means of spending it in the way of Allah.

Indonesia is a country with the largest Muslim population in the world. The total population reached 207,176,162 citizens according to the results of population census by the Central Bureau of Statistics in 2010 (Na'im & Syaputra Hendri, 2011). However, the amount of charity collected is very small compared to the total population of Indonesia. The total of *zakab*, *infaq*, and *sadaqa* 

collected nationally is 4 trillion rupiahs, or less than 1.4% of its potential to reach 280 trillion rupiahs in 2015 (BAZNAS, 2020).

Indonesia has 27 National Amil Zakah (BAZNAS, 2020). In its development, in addition to these institutions, there are also institutions collecting *zakah* and *sadaqa* online. Recorded by the researcher (2017), there are six institutions that initiate the social movement for people through online media in Indonesia which includes *Sedekah Rombongan, Simpul Sedekah, Laskar Sedekah, Sedekah Harian, Makelar Sedekah,* and *Permata Cendekia Gunung Kidul.* 

Sadaqa by online is popular in Indonesia. The popularity of online Sadaqa is due to the continued increase in social media users and also awareness in religion in Indonesia (Ahmadiono, 2020; Mahardiyanto, Fathorrazi, Suparman, Zainuri, & Priyono, 2022). These two things are driving people to continue to give charity, which is made easier by online media.

Zakah management has shifted from conventional to online. It is associated with high internet users in Indonesia. Conventional management is mostly done through collecting *sadaqa* from mosque to mosque or through charity boxes. Meanwhile, the management has used online media to collect *sadaqa*. Sadaqa is for seeking the blessing of Allah by spending the treasure one owns according to the *shariah*. The commands for *sadaqa* has always been evident. As the words of Allah in the Qur'an: "And from their properties was [given] the right of the [needy] petitioner and the deprived." (51: 19).

This verse gives a clear guidance on the rights of others in the property owned. It explains that any assets owned by a man then in them there is a right for poor people even when they ask for it or not. As the Words of Allah in the Qur'an: "Take, [O, Muhammad], from their wealth a charity by which you purify them and cause them increase, and invoke [Allah 's blessings] upon them. Indeed, your invocations are reassurance for them. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing". (9: 103). The term *Sadaqa* in this verse has a broad significance. It includes *zakah, infaq*, and *sadaqa perse*. As referred to in this research, in Table 1.1 (Qaradawi, 2010) SR has classified the term *sadaqa* as follows:

Sadaqa				
Tangible		Intangible		
Fard	Sunnah	1.	Tasbih, Tahmid,	
1. fard al-ayn = $Zakah$	Sadaqa		Tahlil and Takbeer;	
a. Zakat al-Fitr	-	2.	Smile, Power, etc;	
b. Zakat al-Mal		3.	Helping those in	
2. fard al-kifayah: Infaq			distress and in need;	
		4.	Doing good deeds;	

Table 1: Kinds of Sadaqa

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Table 1 provides a classification of *sadaqa*. *Sadaqa* is not only for the provision of property to fellow course. There are also other *amaliahs* included in the category of *Sadaqa* like smile, *dhikr*, helping others. However, those referred to in the discussion of this research is a tangible charity or *Sadaqa* which is visible and a sunnah for Muslims.

# Marketing through Social Media

Marketing through social media is a term used to describe the users of social networks, online communities, blog, wiki, or some other online collaborative media for marketing, public relations, and customer service (Barker et al., 2016). Common social media marketing devices include Twitter, Blogs, LinkedIn, Facebook, Flickr and Youtube.

Internet users and social media in Indonesia continue to increase. In 2014, there were 82 million internet users in Indonesia, and Indonesia ranked 4<sup>th</sup> for the number of Facebook users in the world (Statista, 2020). Moreover, the Twitter users in Indonesia reached 22.8 million (Statista, 2020). Indonesia, in the research published by "We Are Social" (a research institute based in Singapore with a focus on digital users, devices and social media) at the global level in 2019 ranks fourth for the foremost social media users after China, India and Brazil (WeAreSocial.sg, 2019).

Moreover, the internet significantly affects people's daily lives. Statista, a market research institute based in Germany, noted that Facebook users in Indonesia reached 64.6 million in 2018, Twitter users in Indonesia in 2019 reached 22.8 million, and email users reached 143.26 million (Indonesian Internet Service Provider Association (APJII, 2020). Today, Youtube is the most popular social media in Indonesia (WeAreSocial.sg, 2019).

Internet users (netizens) have a significant role in the collection of *sadaqa* and *zakah w*ith the growing number of social media and internet users. This is a fact of which the online community or netizen is a community that should not be underestimated. As stated by Hermawan Kartajaya (2010) that netizens, women, and youths are the three main instruments that will contribute to the structural changes in business, organization, and society today in Indonesia (Kotler, Kartajaya, & Setiawan, 2010).

Some marketing experts express their views on marketing through social media such as Roberts and Zahay (2013), Kartajaya et. al. (2015), and Diamond (2015). The experts give their views on the importance of marketing through social media. Kartajaya et. al. (2014) assesses the importance of building

customer loyalty in the era of social media. Loyalty can take shape in the form of likes, uploads, shares, and tags or better known as advocacy. In short, today's consumer loyalty is not determined by how often consumers repeat purchase of a product but by the extent to which consumers support and recommend other consumers to use the product they had used.

Furthermore, Roberts and Zahay (2013) emphasize the importance of collaboration. Collaboration in this context means the collaboration between companies and consumers where consumers are given the space to express their experience using the company's products in the company's media. Collaboration in this case is a collaboration among employees within a company in which employees are encouraged to help out posting on their social media and actively support the company's products online. This is very important because in online marketing, it is not just the marketing division that must be active in social media, but all the elements in the company's need to collaborate and actively participate in social media for successful online marketing (Chikandiwa, Contogiannis, & Jembere, 2013; Gálvez-Rodríguez, Caba-Pérez, & López-Godoy, 2016; Garczynski, 2016; Valos et al., 2016).

Diamond (2015) emphasizes the importance of visualization and content of messages used by the company in the form of photos, videos, and stories. According to Diamond, social media is about storytelling, so go tell people. The suitability of the narration, images, and videos that can reflect the state of the consumers is the key to the success of marketing through social media (Haryadi Santoso, 2014; K & Snehasish, 2013; Niedermeier, Wang, & Zhang, 2016; Nursanti, 2015) Table 1.2 is a summary of the marketing theory through social media:



Table 2: Summary of Marketing Theory through Social Media



As suggested by experts of social media marketing in Table 1.2, this research tried a combination of some of the theoretical approaches within a framework as a stage of marketing through social media. Figure 1 show some things that complement the other picture, in terms of Advocay, as stated Kotler, *et al* (2017) that consumer loyalty is not only shown when they choose/buy certain products but also when they advocate for these products. Although Diamond (2013) places more emphasis on the power of narratives and images in social media to increase consumer loyalty. All authors agree that if all processes are carried out continuously by listening to consumer expectations, consumers will become very loyal. (Barker et al., 2016; Diamond, 2013; Kotler et al., 2017; Roberts & Zahay, 2013). as shown in Figure 1.3 below. Figure 1.3 is a flow chart of Stages of Marketing through Social Media.



Source: (Barker et al., 2016; Diamond, 2013; Kotler et al., 2010; Roberts & Zahay, 2013).

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

### Research design

This research was an exploratory research using qualitative data with the primary and secondary data sources (Creswell, 2014; Norman K. Denzin, 2011). Sources of primary data were obtained from an in-depth interview with the founder of the SR community,Saptuari Sugiharto. The results of this interview was a helicopter view which was then confirmed to the website team coordinator Sahuri Nur Rochmat; Yogyakarta SR social media coordinator Sinta Murtina Pratiwi, and the SR donors sebagai Triangulasi. The secondary data were obtained from literature reviews, the SR's website, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and other social media.

### Location of the Research

This research was done in Yogyakarta at 2017 as the center of SR and the location where SR was first founded. Moreover, the SR founder, Saptuari Sugiharto was also in Yogyakarta-Indonesia.

### Methods of Data Analysis

Data analysis was performed after the interview and field observations. The analysis was done by transcribing the interview, iterative reading and cross checking, and analyzing the data as needed. The process of data analysis in this research was done simultaneously with the process of data collection.

# **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results after conducting interviews with the founders, the website and social media teams' coordinators of the SR group were clustering based on the theory proposed by Barker et al (2013), Roberts and Zahay (2013), Kartajaya (2015), and Diamond (2015).

### Audiences Observation

SR had never been through this stage. Listening can be listening to the discussion of either the social media donors or the public, including listening to similar movement. The SR just tried to spread their movement in social media simultaneously without seeing anyone in the social media.

Saptuari Sugiharto explained that SR is a social movement that ran without prior in-depth analysis or studying the donors first to initiate this movement.

Sahuri Rochmat Nur added that since the beginning SR had never made an effort to listen to the donors and to analyze more deeply about the mapping of SR donors, even the database of SR donors needed further perfection. By observing the donors. SR has an overview of the segments and targets of donors who continuously donate to SR. This makes SR more aware of the SR development plan in accordance with the expectations of the donors. Donors always seem to wait for SR's social media updates as evidence and a form of SR's responsibility in distributing Sadaqa. So, what the implication?

## **Goal Setting**

Goal setting had been carried out by SR. Saptuari said that SR had a great purpose in determining the main design of the movement. SR group chose social media as a movement. With social media SR had goals and aspirations that this charity movement would be known and followed by people across Indonesia and even some from abroad. The dream would not certainly be realized if they campaigned merely through charity boxes in shops or stalls around (Sugiharto, 2019/ Interview with Saptuari Sugiharto, Sadaqa founder of Sedekah Rombongan On 17 March 2019).

Sahuri Nur Rochmat confirmed that SR chose social media and the online world because of their practicality. For years, people bought newspapers and printed media, but after being read, it will remain as trash. Printed media lack in the cost incurred for marketing. Online marketing is much cheaper, especially for its forte with geographical boundaries. No matter the location, as long as the people have their devices and connected to the internet, the social media can be used to the maximum.

The use of social media is important. Social media is one of the influential factors in the dynamics of business and society. Social media is not considered very significant in changing the overall business structure but also in the pattern of people's lives in Indonesia (Kotler et al., 2017). SR seizes this opportunity by making social media its main strategy. Add some supporting LR on why should focus on social media

### **Defining Strategies**

SR used a dispersal strategy in collecting *sadaqa*. They had never applied the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis before. Strategies undertaken by SR group was a strategy of dispersal in the sense of optimum use of all social media like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Website etc. SR continued to use those online media to spread the social movement. With this strategy, they did not review the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities or threats (SWOT). All the power of the media was used regardless the donors' backgrounds. This strategy was helpful as the *sadaqa* donors are from various backgrounds in the society. There were non-Muslims, young people, or the elderly with different professions. This was the aim of this strategy. It foresaw

that all prospective donors could potentially be accommodated without distinction.

According to Saptuari Sugiharto, SR ran without any SWOT analysis and specific strategies in its movement. Meanwhile, Sahuri Nur viewed SR to have the power of social media and weaknesses in the administration. Despite the absence of a specific strategy based on SWOT analysis, this movement still survives in helping the sickly poor people.

Sedekah Rombongan lack of direction in strategy, this is one of its weaknesses. So that the use of available resources becomes less than optimal. SR needs to analyze with SWOT in detail so that resource optimization can be carried out and the timeframe for achieving targets can be on time. So what the implication?

### Identification of Target Market

Target markets in the context of SR are the SR's donors online. This target was the active users of social media. It was difficult to know exactly the number of SR's donors. However, the active social media users in Indonesia reached 150 million people (WeAreSocial.sg, 2019) and all of them were the target for SR. More specifically, SR group did not specify a target market or segmentation for donors as proposed by Saptuari Sugiharto that all elements of the society starting from students, university students, businessmen, housewives and all the people who were interested in becoming SR's donors could participate in this movement. Surprisingly, some donors even came from a non-Muslim society.

Sahuri agreed. SR group did not specify a target market or the donors. SR was extensively open to all people no matter the amount of money they donated. The concept of togetherness was what started the founding of SR i.e. to help others together or in this sense, *Rombongan*.SR approach market with social media. There are no specific targets carried out by SR. However, they always upload photos, videos and narrations after distributing aid to the poor. It seems that this continuity in updating online media makes the donors closer and confident to leave their sadaqa to SR.

### Instrument selections and Content of the Message

SR's instrument selection was initially marketing through Blog. Precisely, the blog owned by Saptuari Sugiharto. Blogs and Twitter became the initial media for SR to spread its movements. One of the reasons was because the two media were the most popular at the time. Over time, Facebook had become an additional social media for the other SRs. Twitter was also utilized. The use of Twitter and Facebook was done by linking the materials written by Saptuari on his blog with Twitter and Facebook to encourage more people to know. Besides,

SR also used hashtag (#) as a tag of this movement in social media. Since its establishment, hashtag has been used by SR (El-Fatatry, Lee, Khan, & Lehdonvirta, 2011; Fuchs, 2014; Taken Smith, 2012).

The content of the message included photos and captions uploaded by the management to SR's social media. The contents of the message into one group strategy in the online world (Meerangani, Amizi, Md Ariffin, & Rosele, 2021). They did not only report routine and periodic activities conducted by SR, but also persuade the *Sedekaholic* (SR's donors).

### Collaboration

Collaboration was done in SR. In particular, it was the collaboration between the couriers, website teams, social media management, and the new couriers support team. In SR, every courier and new courier received mentoring every Friday. They were encouraged to participate in spreading information about SR which could be by showing the patients' pictures. SR's activities also included designing images with motivation captions by SR's social media teams.

Sedekah Rombongan becomes more efficient in marketing costs. With thorough collaboration within SR's internals at low cost, the speed of information sharing and the breadth of donor reach are more easily achieved by SR. Collaboration by disseminating information together makes all parties feel more ownership of SR. So, what the implication?

### Making a Community

SR had not yet formed a community. Since the beginning, SR only had a fans page which literally could be followed by anyone who were not necessarily becoming a donor. SR practically assessed that this method of marketing through social media was quite effective in spreading SR's messages to the people in the country. Thus, making a community was not urgently required.

The SR community makes donors more loyal. This loyalty that supports SR is growing. Donors and sympathizers often voluntarily spread information and positive things related to SR on their social media. The existence of the community also makes it easier for SRs to get input for improving this SR movement. So, what the implication?

# Monitoring

Monitoring had not been done. Specifically, the process of evaluation and measurement for the marketing success through social media had not been done because there was no target. Measurements can be done if there is a target. (Interview with Sahuri Nur Rochmat, 2019).

SR's monitoring itself, according to Nur Sahuri Rochmat as the SR's website coordinator, was conducted by uploading a minimum of two reports on SR's website every week. The reports were used as a monitor for the couriers' movements in the field and also as a form of accountability to donors. The continuous and constantly uploaded reports were the proofs that SR actively contributed to the society with its agendas.

Monitoring increases donor confidence. With regular monitoring in the form of uploading photos and videos on social media, it is hoped that donor loyalty will be maintained. This corresponds to Diamond (2013) which states that the power of narration, photos and videos makes consumer loyalty increase (Diamond, 2013) So what the implication?

# *Tuning* (Continuity)

Tuning had been run by SR. This process was done SR by continuously establishing the synergies between the couriers and donors. SR's couriers could not take action if there were no funds to disperse. Likewise, the donors would have difficulty giving donations if no couriers were present. On the other hand the donors get an accountability report donate through social media managed by courier SR.

Coordination and tuning among the SR's couriers were continuously promoted by Dede Syaifudin (Kang Eded) as the operational coordinator of SR. Coordination was intended to solidify and make the cooperation and communication among the SR's couriers consistent. This also included the cooperation with the regional and municipal coordinators to maintain the coordination and continuity inside the SR.

Moreover, Sahuri Nur mentioned that there were always ongoing tuning efforts in SR. The action of continuity was done through coordinating in RAKORNAS (National Coordination Meeting) held annually in order to maintain the continuity within the SR so that the target could be achieved and straight on point.

Sahuri Nur assessed that RAKORNAS also facilitated couriers throughout Indonesia to see and meet each other. Within a year, other than the SR's *Milad* (birthday), this meeting was intended to refresh, consolidate, give opinions, and update the information on the experiences that the couriers had gone through in each area of operation. It is wished that in this event problems would find their solutions.

In accordance with the 9 stages above, four stages were done by SR, and 5 stages were not. The five stages are listening to consumers/donors, defining strategies, target identification market, establishing community, and monitoring. It's true, even though SR only did 4 stages, SR still exists until now. In this case,

the other 5 stages will certainly make SR exist and reach a wider range of donors. Listening to the voice of donors makes donors more trusting and loyal. Defining a strategy can streamline resources and streamline the timeframe for achieving the target even though SR does not specifically identify its target market. Including by forming a community, monitoring regularly, will make the measurability and direction of the SR movement clearer, more effective and efficient. So what the implication?

In addition, there was one additional stage taken by SR. The stage was referred to as Information Supply Flow Strategy in SR's Social Media. This strategy emerged due to the spread of SR's movement across the country and its broad scope which even reached remote areas that required special strategies in the supply of information.

### SR's Information Supply Flow

The SR's website is its spearhead. This was stated by Nur Sahuri in which the website was the outcomes of all information disseminated through social media. Information, photos, and narratives were supplied by couriers from each area of operation. The couriers reported their activities to the municipal or regional coordinators about the target, the amount of donation, and photographs. Afterwards, the regional/municipal coordinators reported to the head office of SR via email. Then the website team performed a final check before posting on the website.

Moreover, the SR's social media group was owned by the administration management lf each operational area. WhatsApp groups specifically for the SR's social media teams were also created to facilitate data transfer across cities.

#### **CONCLUSION**

SR has managed to effectively collect *sadaqa* online. SR conducted a series of online strategies including: Setting Goals such as the expectation that SR movement is widely known outside of Yogyakarta as well. Instrument Selection and Content of the Message. The instruments were the most popular media in society. The message contained the information of funds raised for certain patient in the picture and the narratives about the aforementioned patient.

Collaboration was in the form of encouragement to the couriers to participate in spreading the words of SR every Friday. Continuity/tuning was attempted through organizing an annual national coordination meeting (RAKORNAS) and through co-operational support (Dede Syaifuddin) who did routine visits to different areas to provide encouragement to the couriers in the remote areas. From those strategies, the contents of the message in form of images and narratives of the patients was the main factor that encouraged donors to deposit funds to SR.

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