

MARKETING COMMUNICATION STRATEGY OF SOLO RADIO FM IN EFFORTS TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF ADVERTISERS

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Abstract. Amid the accelerating digitalization of media, local radio stations face increasingly intense competition in attracting advertisers. Although a number of studies have examined radio marketing communication, empirical research integrating pull, push, and pass strategies within a unified analytical framework—particularly through Social Exchange Theory—remains limited in the context of local radio in Indonesia. This study aims to analyze the marketing communication strategies of Solo Radio FM in increasing the number of advertisers using a qualitative descriptive design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with the Marketing Manager and Public Relations officer, supported by direct observation and document review. Data were analyzed using interactive content analysis techniques. The findings indicate that the integration of program quality enhancement as a pull strategy, personalized negotiation and flexible package design as push strategies, and the maintenance of long-term relationships based on trust and added value as pass strategies collectively form a reciprocal value exchange. These strategies reduce advertisers' perceived costs while simultaneously strengthening relational commitment. Theoretically, this study extends the application of Social Exchange Theory in the relationship between local media and advertisers by explaining how perceived rewards, costs, and benefits shape strategic communication practices. Practically, this research offers an adaptive relational marketing framework to sustain the competitiveness of local radio.

Keywords: Marketing Communication Strategy, Local Radio, Advertisers, Social Exchange Theory, Pull–Push–Pass Strategy

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has fundamentally transformed the global media landscape by altering patterns of information production, distribution, and consumption. Media digitalization has generated interactive, personalized, and on-demand platforms that compete intensely for audience attention (Evita et al., 2023). In this increasingly competitive environment, traditional media are required to adopt strategic adaptations to remain relevant and sustainable.

Amid the expansion of digital media, radio continues to demonstrate resilience as a mass communication medium that is accessible, economical, and flexible. These characteristics allow audiences to access broadcasts while engaging in other activities. Radio's strengths lie in its immediacy, emotional proximity to listeners, and its ability to efficiently reach specific audience segments (Anastasia & Adjie, 2020). These attributes reinforce the position of radio—particularly local radio—in maintaining niche markets at the regional level.

In Indonesia, the broadcasting industry operates under Law Number 32 of 2002 on Broadcasting, which positions broadcasting institutions not only as business entities but also as social institutions responsible for public education, national integration, and community welfare (Raintung et al., 2024). The development of networked and local radio following the implementation of this regulation has intensified competition, particularly in attracting audiences and securing advertising revenue. For private radio stations, advertising constitutes the primary source of income. Therefore, efforts to maintain and increase the number of advertisers are essential to business sustainability (Sofy et al., 2023). Within this framework, marketing

communication strategies function as key instruments for strengthening radio competitiveness.

Several studies indicate that program quality and listener loyalty significantly influence advertiser interest. Research by Iling & Azeharie (2023) and Juhari et al. (2025) shows that audience satisfaction and loyalty strongly correlate with program quality and brand image. Saputri & Astuti (2024) further emphasize that alignment between broadcast format and audience lifestyle positively impacts advertising acquisition. In addition, relational marketing approaches are considered crucial in maintaining relationships with advertisers. Hutapea & Simbolon (2022) argue that systematically designed marketing communication enhances advertiser trust. Magnaye & Tarusan (2023) highlight that digital media convergence strengthens radio sustainability during times of crisis.

Theoretically, the relationship between media and advertisers can be explained through Social Exchange Theory (SET). This theory posits that sustainable relationships are formed when perceived rewards outweigh incurred costs (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Ahmad et al., 2023). In the relationship between radio and advertisers, rewards may include audience access, enhanced credibility, and brand exposure, whereas costs encompass financial investment and opportunity risk. Trust, reciprocity, and long-term commitment serve as key determinants in sustaining cooperation. This perspective provides an analytical foundation for understanding how marketing communication strategies build relational value beyond transactional exchanges.

Although numerous studies have addressed radio marketing communication, most focus on isolated aspects such as program quality, digital convergence, or advertiser relations separately. Research

integrating pull, push, and pass strategies within a unified analytical framework and linking them to Social Exchange Theory remains limited, particularly in culturally based local radio stations facing digitalization pressures. Moreover, empirical studies on local radio marketing strategies in Indonesia are relatively scarce compared to research on national broadcasters or digital media platforms.

Solo Radio FM, a private local radio station operating in Surakarta since 2003, represents a relevant empirical case. Amid competition with networked radio and digital media, Solo Radio FM has sustained its existence through youth-oriented programming and the promotion of local cultural identity (Salwa & Triyono, 2025). The continuity of its relationships with advertisers indicates the presence of strategic marketing communication practices worthy of academic analysis.

Based on this background and research gap, this study formulates the following research questions: (1) How does Solo Radio FM implement pull, push, and pass strategies in marketing communication to increase the number of advertisers? (2) How can these strategies be explained through the perspective of Social Exchange Theory? (3) What supporting and inhibiting factors influence the effectiveness of these strategies?

This study aims to analyze the marketing communication strategies implemented by Solo Radio FM in increasing the number of advertisers through an integrative framework combining pull, push, and pass strategies with Social Exchange Theory. Theoretically, this research contributes to strengthening the study of broadcasting marketing communication through a relational and integrative approach. Practically, the findings provide guidance for local radio managers in designing adaptive and sustainable marketing communication

strategies aligned with regional market characteristics in the digital era.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Exchange Theory in Media–Advertiser Relationships. Social Exchange Theory (SET), developed by Homans, Blau, and Emerson, conceptualizes social interaction as a structured process of reciprocal exchange. In this process, actors evaluate rewards, costs, alternatives, and levels of dependence before deciding to initiate, maintain, or terminate a relationship (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Ahmad et al., 2023). In this study, SET is not employed merely as an interpretive tool after data collection but as the primary theoretical framework guiding research design, formulation of interview questions, development of analytical categories, and data coding processes. The operationalization of SET constructs—reciprocity, comparison level, dependence, power asymmetry, alternatives, rewards, costs, and benefits—forms the foundation of the overall analysis.

In media–advertiser relationships, rewards are operationalized as tangible and intangible benefits received by advertisers, such as audience reach, increased brand awareness, credibility transfer, promotional support, and relational comfort. Costs encompass not only financial expenditures for advertising placement but also opportunity costs, promotional uncertainty, and relational risk (Verawaty & Rembulan, 2022). Perceived benefits are understood as the difference between rewards and costs evaluated by advertisers, forming the basis for decisions to continue or discontinue cooperation (Muhammad & Jacky, 2023).

Reciprocity is operationalized as the expectation that advertising investment will be matched by proportional promotional performance and service quality from the radio station. Comparison level (CL) refers to

evaluative standards formed through advertisers' experiences with other media platforms. Comparison level for alternatives (CLalt) reflects assessments of competing media options, including other local radio stations and digital platforms. These constructs are translated into interview indicators exploring how advertisers evaluate Solo Radio FM relative to other advertising channels and previous collaboration experiences.

SET also emphasizes dependence and power asymmetry, which emerge when one party controls valuable and difficult-to-replace resources. In this study, audience segmentation and Solo Radio FM's local cultural positioning are understood as strategic resources that may create advertiser dependence. Conversely, advertisers' financial capital constitutes a crucial resource for the sustainability of the radio station. This balance of dependence shapes negotiation dynamics and influences the flexibility of advertising packages.

Homans' propositions—success, stimulus, value, aggression–approval, and rationality—are explicitly linked to empirical findings (Cook et al., 2013; Coyle-Shapiro & Diehl, 2018). The success proposition explains advertisers' tendency to repeat placements when previous campaigns achieve satisfactory promotional targets. The stimulus proposition clarifies that positive past collaboration experiences function as cues to continue partnerships. The value proposition is reflected in preferences for media platforms perceived to generate greater promotional impact relative to costs incurred. The aggression–approval proposition explains dissatisfaction when expected rewards are not achieved, leading to reduced advertising frequency. The rationality proposition underlies advertisers' strategic calculations in selecting media channels that provide the greatest benefit within budget constraints.

Thus, the relationship between Solo Radio FM and its advertisers is understood as a dynamic exchange system characterized by negotiated reciprocity, comparative evaluation, and strategic interdependence. Marketing communication strategies—pull, push, and pass—are analyzed as mechanisms to increase perceived rewards, reduce costs, strengthen dependence, and enhance relational commitment. The integration of SET constructs into the methodological design and empirical analysis affirms the role of Social Exchange Theory as a predictive and explanatory framework embedded throughout the research.

Marketing Communication Theory.

Marketing communication is a strategic process of message delivery designed to influence the attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors of target audiences through specific media. Dermawan & Barkah (2022) explain that effective communication occurs when there is shared meaning between the communicator and the communicant regarding the conveyed message. This process produces cognitive, affective, and psychomotor effects that determine marketing success.

Natsir et al. (2022) argue that marketing communication consists of the elements of communicator, communicant, message, media, objectives, feedback, and product. The effectiveness of marketing communication is determined by the alignment of messages with audience characteristics, appropriate media selection, and the ability of communication managers to respond to feedback (Tandaju & Fransisca, 2024). Therefore, marketing communication requires a deep understanding of the audience and the characteristics of the media used.

From a modern perspective, marketing is not understood merely as a sales activity, but as a social and managerial process of creating, offering, and exchanging

value to satisfy individual and group needs (Nordin & Raval, 2023). Troise & Camilleri (2021) emphasize that marketing is oriented toward fulfilling human and social needs; thus, marketing communication plays an important role in building sustainable relationships between organizations and stakeholders.

In radio media, marketing communication functions as a means of forming mutually beneficial relationships between radio stations and advertisers. Radio serves not only as an advertising channel, but also as a strategic partner that helps advertisers effectively convey messages to segmented audiences.

Marketing Communication Strategy of Radio Media. Marketing communication strategy is an integrated plan to determine target markets and develop the marketing mix in order to achieve organizational objectives. Rosário & Casaca (2023) emphasize that marketing strategies are oriented toward creating value and profit through long-term relationships with consumers. Consequently, marketing communication strategies are directed toward sustaining business relationships rather than merely achieving short-term results.

Pricilla et al. (2023) classify marketing communication strategies into three main approaches: pull strategy, push strategy, and pass strategy. The pull strategy focuses on the attractiveness of content and programs to draw audience interest. The push strategy emphasizes direct offerings to advertisers through various forms of advertising and promotion. The pass strategy is aimed at shaping positive public opinion through promotional activities, sponsorships, and event organization.

Solo Radio FM implements its marketing communication strategy through broadcast content management, program format selection, broadcast scheduling, and

broadcasting styles tailored to audience characteristics. This strategy is intended to increase listener numbers while strengthening the radio station's appeal as an effective advertising medium for advertisers (Saputri & Astuti, 2022).

Integration of Social Exchange Theory and Marketing Communication Strategy.

Social Exchange Theory provides a conceptual foundation for understanding marketing communication strategies oriented toward long-term relationships. Nogueira et al. (2023) assert that trust and commitment are key variables in building sustainable business relationships. Marketing communication strategies that create reciprocal value contribute to increased loyalty among business partners.

Solo Radio FM applies social exchange principles through personal selling activities, direct visits to advertisers, incentive provision, and collaborative event organization. These practices create both economic and relational value exchanges, thereby strengthening advertisers' trust and commitment to the radio station (Saputri & Astuti, 2022). Marketing communication strategies based on social exchange encourage the creation of mutually beneficial and sustainable relationships.

Broadcasting as an Instrument of Marketing Communication Strategy.

Broadcasting plays a central role in the effectiveness of radio marketing communication. Broadcasting strategies include audience segmentation, program selection, broadcasting style, and message creativity to align with advertisers' objectives (Firmansyah et al., 2023). Appropriate broadcasting styles influence audience responses to advertising messages and enhance the media's attractiveness to advertisers (Harliantara et al., 2023).

Creativity in message delivery is an important factor in capturing listeners' attention and building added value for advertisers (Saputri & Astuti, 2022). The effectiveness of broadcasting strategies is measured through the achievement of marketing objectives, including increases in the number and loyalty of advertisers (Yulista et al., 2025). Therefore, this study focuses its analysis on the content, format, and broadcasting style of Solo Radio FM as part of its marketing communication strategy to increase the number of advertisers.



Figure 1. Research Conceptual Framework

METHOD

Research Design and Approach. This study employs a descriptive design with a qualitative approach. The qualitative approach was selected because the research aims to obtain an in-depth understanding of the marketing communication strategies implemented by Solo Radio FM in its efforts to increase the number of advertisers (Lim, 2025). The focus of the study is not directed toward quantitative measurement or testing relationships between variables, but rather toward examining the processes, meanings, and marketing communication practices carried out by the radio media organization.

The descriptive approach is used to systematically and factually describe the phenomenon of marketing communication strategies in accordance with empirical conditions in the field (Stanley, 2023). In line with the view of Muzari et al. (2022), qualitative research produces descriptive data in the form of words, both spoken and

written, that represent the experiences, perspectives, and strategies of the research subjects. Therefore, this research design is directed at identifying patterns of marketing communication strategies, the constraints encountered, and the forms of evaluation conducted by Solo Radio FM in attracting and retaining advertisers.

Research Location. This research was conducted at Solo Radio FM, located on Jl. Menteri Supeno, Manahan, Surakarta, Central Java. The selection of this location was based on the consideration that Solo Radio FM is a local radio media outlet that actively implements marketing communication strategies directly to advertisers through personal selling practices and public relations activities, making it relevant to the focus of the study.

Informants and Informant Selection Technique. Informants in this study were selected using purposive sampling, which involves deliberate selection based on criteria aligned with research objectives (Etikan et al., 2016). This technique is appropriate in qualitative research as it enables access to in-depth data from individuals directly involved in the phenomenon under investigation.

To enhance data credibility and reduce potential bias, this study did not rely solely on a single organizational informant. The primary informant was a Solo Radio FM employee serving as Marketing and Public Relations officer. This individual was selected due to direct involvement in planning, implementing, and evaluating marketing communication strategies, including advertiser acquisition, negotiation processes, client services, and advertising activity reporting.

To address methodological limitations arising from reliance on a single organizational perspective, additional informants were included to strengthen data

triangulation. These included an active advertiser who has collaborated with Solo Radio FM for more than one year and a managerial-level representative, namely the station manager or management representative. The advertiser provided an external perspective regarding the effectiveness of marketing communication strategies and the benefits derived from the partnership. Meanwhile, the management representative offered structural and policy-level insights concerning marketing communication planning and evaluation.

The inclusion of multiple informants aimed to reduce the risk of self-serving narratives and organizational bias while presenting a more balanced representation of media–advertiser relations. General informant criteria included active involvement in marketing communication processes or advertising cooperation, a minimum of one year of collaboration experience for advertisers, willingness to participate, and the ability to provide reflective and evaluative perspectives on the partnership process. The integration of diverse perspectives enhances research credibility and minimizes limitations commonly associated with single-informant qualitative research designs.

Types and Sources of Data. This study utilizes both primary and secondary data to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon and to strengthen validity through methodological triangulation. Primary data were obtained through semi-structured in-depth interviews with the Marketing and Public Relations officer of Solo Radio FM, a long-term collaborating advertiser, and a managerial-level management representative.

Interviews explored perceptions of marketing communication strategies, negotiation processes, media–advertiser relational dynamics, perceptions of rewards

and costs as explained in Social Exchange Theory, and supporting and inhibiting factors in increasing the number of advertisers (Allmark et al., 2009). The involvement of an advertiser as an external informant functioned as a cross-validation mechanism to assess consistency between internally articulated strategies and the advertiser’s actual experience.

Secondary data were obtained from relevant documentary sources, including internal company documents such as advertising rate cards, advertising reports, media kits, and listener profile data; accessible Nielsen rating summaries; promotional materials and digital media documentation such as Instagram content; as well as scholarly literature and regulatory documents relevant to the study. These documentary sources served as triangulation tools to verify interview statements through written evidence.

Accordingly, this study does not rely solely on subjective informant narratives but is supported by empirical data that strengthen the validity and depth of the analysis.

Data Collection Techniques. Data collection techniques were carried out through observation and in-depth interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Observation was conducted by directly observing Solo Radio FM’s marketing communication activities, particularly interactions with advertisers, in order to obtain an empirical overview of ongoing marketing communication practices.

In-depth interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner to provide flexibility for the informant to convey experiences, perspectives, and marketing communication strategies being implemented. This technique was used to obtain detailed data aligned with the research objectives.

Data Analysis Techniques. Data analysis was conducted qualitatively by referring to the interactive model of Miles et al. (2014), which includes three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data reduction was carried out through the process of selecting, focusing, and simplifying observation and interview data to align with the research focus.

Data presentation was conducted in the form of systematically arranged descriptive narratives to facilitate understanding of the identified patterns of marketing communication strategies. The conclusion-drawing stage was carried out continuously through a verification process to maintain the consistency, accuracy, and validity of the research findings.

Data Validity Testing. Data validity was ensured through the application of credibility tests, including data triangulation, audit trails, and thick description (Anggito & Setiawan, 2018). Data triangulation was carried out by comparing information obtained from various sources, times, and data collection situations to ensure the consistency of the research results.

An audit trail was implemented through systematic documentation of the entire research process, starting from data collection, interview transcription, field notes, to analytical decision-making. Thick description was applied by presenting detailed accounts of marketing communication processes and the informant's interpretations of the implemented strategies, enabling readers to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study on Solo Radio FM's marketing communication strategy in increasing the

number of advertisers. The data were obtained through in-depth interviews with key informants who concurrently serve as Marketing, Account Executive, and Public Relations officers. The analysis focuses on the dynamics of social exchange occurring within relationships with advertisers, including potential strategic contradictions, risks of failure, and relational tensions in practice.

The findings indicate that Solo Radio FM's marketing communication strategy is not solely oriented toward selling advertising space, but also toward strengthening broadcast product quality and building long-term relationships with advertisers. This approach reflects a degree of ambivalence. On the one hand, the strategy reinforces client loyalty. On the other hand, reliance on specific personal relationships may create structural vulnerability if it is not institutionalized within a robust organizational system.

Solo Radio FM's Marketing Communication Strategy in Increasing the Number of Advertisers. Solo Radio FM's marketing communication strategy is based on the assumption that the quality of its broadcast programs constitutes the primary foundation for attracting advertisers. On-air programs broadcast from 06:00 to 23:00 are periodically updated to align with the characteristics of a young audience. Its positioning as the number one youth radio station in Solo City reflects the success of this segmentation strategy.

However, overly concentrated segmentation toward youth also entails competitive risks. Narrow specialization may limit the expansion of the advertising market targeting broader age groups. Amid digital media disruption, radio rating dominance does not automatically translate into advertising effectiveness when advertisers compare it with measurable digital metrics

such as engagement rate, click-through rate, and conversion tracking.

From the perspective of Social Exchange Theory, program quality and the number of listeners are positioned as initial rewards. However, this theory emphasizes that actors conduct rational evaluations of available alternatives. Advertisers assess not only the internal rewards of Solo Radio FM but also compare them with social media and streaming platforms. Therefore, the exchange value offered is relative in nature.

Pull Strategy: Strengthening the Product as a Reward. The pull strategy is implemented through strengthening broadcast quality and the listener base as the primary attraction. One informant stated:

“What we sell first is not the advertising, but the listeners. If the listeners are strong, advertisers usually come on their own.”

This statement indicates an orientation toward audience commodification, where listeners are positioned as valuable commodities for advertisers. This strategy is effective when reputation and ratings remain stable. However, a latent contradiction exists. The assumption that advertisers will come independently may reduce proactive market expansion efforts. In intense media competition, a passive approach may result in lost opportunities to attract new advertisers who are more responsive to competitors’ aggressive strategies. Another informant stated:

“Advertisers are usually interested after they know our ratings and listener segmentation.”

Ratings function as an instrument for legitimizing reward value. However, ratings represent audience quantity rather than attention quality. Challenges arise when advertisers demand proof of conversion or direct impact on sales, which is structurally

more difficult for radio media to measure compared to digital platforms.

Within the Social Exchange Theory framework, high rewards can reduce perceived costs. However, if alternative media offer more measurable rewards at relatively comparable costs, Solo Radio FM’s bargaining position may be reduced. Thus, the pull strategy is effective as a foundation but insufficient as a single competitive instrument.

Push Strategy: Package Offers and Cost Management. The push strategy is realized through intensive and personal interpersonal communication. One informant stated:

“We treat clients as friends, not just as a marketing-to-client relationship.”

This approach strengthens the affective dimension of social exchange. Personal relationships increase trust and reduce the potential for open conflict. However, a personal-relationship-based approach may create professional dilemmas, particularly when price negotiations and advertising effectiveness evaluations do not meet client expectations. Friendship-based relationships may complicate contract renegotiation or rate adjustments. Another informant stated:

“We need to understand the client’s profile first, then we create a package that matches their needs and budget.”

This strategy reflects flexibility in cost management. From the Social Exchange Theory perspective, Solo Radio FM attempts to lower perceived costs through customized packages. However, excessive pricing flexibility risks lowering rate standards and creating disparities among clients. If pricing differences become known, relational tensions may increase.

Analysis of strategic failures indicates that package adjustments do not always result in contract renewals. Some advertisers with limited budgets terminate

cooperation due to the absence of significant sales impact. This confirms that cost management alone is insufficient; perceived profit must be validated through clients' empirical experience.

In broader competition, a push strategy based on personal relationships is a strength in the local market. However, it is relatively weak when facing national companies that implement strict data-based evaluations and key performance indicators.

Pass Strategy: Relationships, Trust, and Long-Term Profit. The pass strategy represents the consolidation of long-term relationships. One informant stated:

“Client maintenance is no joke, because maintaining clients is more difficult than finding new ones.”

This statement reflects awareness of the high relational costs involved in retaining clients. Cooperation lasting more than six years indicates stable social exchange. However, loyalty must be critically analyzed—whether it is driven by optimal satisfaction or by limited equivalent local media alternatives.

Providing additional benefits such as free digital services and sponsorship support increases perceived value. However, this strategy may pressure profit margins if not proportionally calculated. Increased incentives without corresponding revenue growth may create financial imbalance.

Transparency in broadcast reporting also influences client trust. Providing reports and proof of broadcast enhances accountability, yet verification systems that are not fully digitally integrated may limit credibility in the eyes of advertisers accustomed to real-time analytics dashboards.

From the Social Exchange Theory perspective, the pass strategy indicates the achievement of balance between rewards and costs in repeated exchanges. However, this

balance is dynamic and vulnerable to market changes, shifts in young audiences' preferences toward digital platforms, and increased advertiser demands for accountability.

Table 1. Summary of Solo Radio FM's Pull, Push, and Pass Strategies

Strategy Type	Strategic Focus	Main Activities	Social Exchange Dimension	Expected Impact on Advertisers
Pull Strategy	Strengthening broadcast products as core value	Improving program quality; Maintaining young audience segmentation consistency; Utilizing Nielsen ratings data; Emphasizing listener loyalty	Increased returns (audience reach, brand exposure, brand awareness)	Increased advertiser interest based on a strong audience base
Push Strategy	Direct selling and cost management	Personal selling; Direct visits	Cost management and value	Increased willingness to advertise

		and negotiations; Customized advertising packages; Price and frequency adjustments	optimization despite budget limitations	se despite budget limitations
Pass Strategy	Maintaining long-term relationships	Client retention; Transparent reporting; Value-added services (digital exposure, sponsorship support); Strengthening trust	Maximization of benefits and relationships committment	Increased advertiser loyalty and partnership sustainability

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Increasing the Number of Advertisers. The findings show that the increase in the number of advertisers at Solo Radio FM is determined not only by marketing communication strategies but also by a configuration of structural and relational factors operating simultaneously. These factors cannot be simplistically categorized

as “supporting” or “inhibiting.” Instead, they form a complex dynamic of social exchange between the media and advertisers. From the perspective of Social Exchange Theory (SET), supporting factors strengthen perceptions of reward and profit, while inhibiting factors increase perceptions of cost and risk within cooperative relationships.

Supporting Factors Broadcast Product Quality and Number of Listeners. Program quality and the number of listeners constitute the primary foundation for attracting advertiser interest. Solo Radio FM positions its audience as a strategic commodity with high exchange value. As stated by the informant:

“What we actually sell is the listeners. As long as our programs are successful and we have many listeners, that becomes our main strength in attracting advertisers.”

Within the SET framework, the number of listeners represents the main reward offered to advertisers. The larger and more loyal the audience, the higher the perceived benefit calculated by advertisers in their cost–benefit analysis.

However, structural vulnerabilities exist. First, reliance on listener numbers as the main selling point becomes risky amid audience fragmentation due to migration to digital platforms. Second, program success does not necessarily correlate directly with sales conversion effectiveness for advertisers. If advertisers do not perceive measurable economic impact, the symbolic reward of “a large number of listeners” may be considered insufficient.

Therefore, although this factor is a primary strength, more concrete measurement of promotional impact is required to maintain commercial relevance.

Solo Radio FM’s Reputation as a Local Media Outlet. Its reputation as an

established local media outlet strengthens Solo Radio FM's legitimacy in the eyes of advertisers. Established credibility reduces the need for initial persuasion during offer negotiations. As conveyed by an informant:

"When advertisers come to Solo and want to place radio ads, they usually look for Solo Radio FM."

Within the SET framework, reputation functions as both a symbolic reward and trust capital. Credibility reduces perceived risk in cooperation decisions.

However, reputation may also become a source of vulnerability. When positioning relies excessively on historical status as a leading radio station, there is a risk of innovation stagnation. In the midst of aggressive, data-driven digital media competition, local reputation alone is insufficient to maintain competitiveness.

Moreover, high reputation raises advertiser expectations regarding performance. If those expectations are not met, the gap between image and reality may trigger relational tension.

Personal Communication Approach and Service Flexibility.

A personal communication approach is a significant factor in maintaining advertiser relationships. As expressed by an informant:

"Advertisers need to feel appreciated, especially big clients or clients from outside the city."

This strategy strengthens the relational exchange dimension within SET, where trust, closeness, and emotional comfort function as non-monetary rewards that support relationship sustainability. Flexibility in package adjustment also serves as a cost management mechanism:

"If a client's budget is limited, we still accept it. We adjust the package and reduce the frequency."

This approach demonstrates adaptability and business empathy. However,

excessive flexibility may erode pricing structures and create perceptions of unfairness among clients. Reducing advertising frequency to accommodate budgets may also decrease campaign effectiveness, ultimately affecting advertiser evaluations of the media.

Thus, while effective in strengthening short-term relationships, this strategy requires control to avoid weakening long-term commercial value.

Utilization of Digital Media as Promotional Support.

The use of Instagram as a supporting channel expands promotional exposure from audio to audio-visual formats. As stated by an informant:

"Besides being heard, advertisers can also be seen through our Instagram."

From the SET perspective, digital integration increases perceived rewards because advertisers gain multiplatform exposure. This enriches the value proposition and strengthens bargaining power compared to purely conventional broadcast media.

However, digital positioning that remains supportive rather than strategic indicates incomplete transformation. If digital platforms are treated merely as complements while competitors position them as the core of data-driven strategies, the risk of lagging behind increases.

Furthermore, Instagram's effectiveness depends on authentic engagement levels. An imbalance between follower numbers and actual interaction may reduce the credibility of the digital value offered.



Figure 2. Solo Radio FM Instagram Account

Table 2. Supporting Factors in Increasing the Number of Advertisers

Supporting Factor	Description	Strategic Function	Social Exchange Dimension
Program Quality	High-quality programs aligned with youth segmentation	Core product differentiation	Enhances perceived returns
Audience Size and Loyalty	Strong audience base based on Nielsen ratings	Indicator of market attractiveness	Strengthens value proposition
Local Media Reputation	Recognized as a leading youth radio station in Solo	Builds initial advertiser trust	Reduces perceived risk (cost)

Personal Communication Approach	Friendly, relational, partner-based interaction	Increases negotiation effectiveness	Builds trust and reciprocity
Service Flexibility	Adjustment of packages and pricing according to advertiser capacity	Accommodates variations in advertiser capability	Balances perceptions of returns and costs
Utilization of Digital Media (Instagram)	Additional promotional exposure in audio and visual formats	Strengthens media convergence	Increases perceived benefits

Inhibiting Factors

Unstable Media Industry Conditions. Post-pandemic media industry conditions constitute a significant structural factor. As stated by an informant:

“The media condition now is not as good as it used to be. Many brands have cut their advertising budgets.”

From the SET perspective, this situation increases perceived costs for advertisers, as promotional budget allocation becomes more selective and return-oriented. When budgets shrink, media outlets unable to demonstrate measurable effectiveness risk being marginalized.

Nevertheless, industry conditions are not entirely external. Crises can also serve as momentum for strategic differentiation. Media capable of articulating strong value propositions still have survival opportunities. Therefore, industry conditions simultaneously test innovation capacity and marketing communication resilience.

Competition Among Media. Competition with other radio stations and digital media creates significant competitive pressure. As expressed by an informant:

“Advertisers will definitely window shop first, comparing prices and listeners from several radio stations.”

This phenomenon indicates that advertisers perform rational calculations by comparing rewards and costs across media outlets. Within SET, this situation increases advertiser bargaining power and pressures the media’s negotiating position.

Price competition may trigger rate reductions if value differentiation is weak. Meanwhile, digital media offer advantages such as real-time performance data and precise targeting, which conventional radio cannot fully match.

Thus, the primary challenge lies not only in horizontal competition among radio stations but also in cross-platform competition that reshapes advertising effectiveness standards.

Unrealistic Advertiser Expectations.

Differences in perception regarding the function of radio advertising constitute a significant relational barrier. As explained by an informant:

“There are clients who think that once the ad is aired, sales will immediately increase.”

Instant expectations of sales growth indicate a gap in understanding regarding marketing communication functions, particularly the distinction between brand

awareness formation and direct sales activation.

From the SET perspective, when expected rewards are not achieved, advertisers may perceive losses even if the media has fulfilled its obligations optimally. This situation may generate tension and renegotiation within the relationship.

This condition highlights the importance of strategic education from the early stages of cooperation contracts. Suboptimal expectation management may negatively affect long-term evaluations of media performance.

Table 3. Inhibiting Factors in Increasing the Number of Advertisers

Inhibiting Factor	Description	Impact on Strategy Implementation	Strategic Implication
Unstable Media Industry Conditions	Decline in advertising budget post-pandemic	Reduced number of new advertisers	Requires price adjustments and package innovation
Inter-Media Competition	Competition with other radio stations and digital platforms	Advertisers compare prices and audiences	Requires stronger differentiation and clear communication of advantages
Unrealistic Advertiser Expectations	Expectation of instant sales growth	Mismatch in perceived outcomes	Requires continuous advertiser

			education
Advertising	Internal	Reduced advertising	Requires flexible
Budget	Corporate	g frequency	negotiation
Efficiency	Cost reduction	or duration	approaches
Policies			

Discussion. The findings of this study indicate that Solo Radio FM implements an integrated marketing communication strategy through a combination of pull, push, and pass strategies. Descriptively, these results are consistent with the literature on radio marketing communication. Analytically, however, the strategy cannot be understood merely as an operational practice, but rather as a mechanism of value negotiation within a dynamic and interest-laden process of social exchange.

The pull strategy is implemented through strengthening program quality, maintaining content consistency, and aligning broadcast formats with audience characteristics. A loyal listener base becomes the primary value offered to advertisers, as it ensures message reach and promotional effectiveness. These findings are consistent with Iling & Azeharie (2023) and Juhari et al. (2025), who emphasize that program quality is the main factor attracting both listeners and advertisers to radio. Research by Saputri & Astuti (2022) also shows that alignment between broadcast format and market segmentation increases advertiser interest.

Nevertheless, reliance on program quality as the primary resource reflects a competitive structure still grounded in conventional media logic. In a digital media landscape driven by algorithms and data analytics, content quality alone is not always sufficient to maintain competitiveness. Digital platforms offer precise conversion metrics, whereas radio tends to rely on audience reach estimates. Therefore,

although Solo Radio FM’s pull strategy aligns with established radio marketing practices, it risks facing limitations if not accompanied by a comprehensive data-driven transformation in effectiveness measurement.

The push strategy is realized through direct selling activities with a personalized approach, the provision of varied advertising packages, and service flexibility. This strategy positions personal selling as the main instrument for communicating the value of radio advertising to advertisers. These findings align with Anastasia & Adjie (2020), who highlight the importance of interpersonal communication and direct negotiation in attracting and retaining radio advertisers.

Analytically, however, an intensive personal approach also contains potential vulnerabilities. When relationships depend excessively on interpersonal closeness, there is a risk of dependence on specific individuals rather than on a stable institutional system. Changes in marketing personnel may weaken personally established relationships. Furthermore, high service flexibility may reduce pricing consistency and compress profit margins. In highly competitive situations, this condition may encourage price-based negotiations rather than value-based exchanges, shifting the orientation from value-based exchange to price competition. Thus, while the push strategy is effective in the short term for maintaining relationships, it requires a structured relationship management system to avoid relational imbalance or dependency.

The pass strategy is implemented through public relations functions by maintaining Solo Radio FM’s image as a credible local media outlet actively engaged in promotional activities. This strategy reinforces the findings of Hutapea & Simbolon (2022) regarding the importance of media reputation in radio advertising

marketing. From a symbolic perspective, reputation functions as a trust enhancer that reduces advertisers' risk perceptions. A strong reputation accelerates decision-making processes because advertisers do not need to conduct extensive preliminary evaluations.

However, positioning itself as a leading local media outlet also creates high performance expectations. If campaign results fail to meet expectations, the gap between image and reality may accelerate the decline of trust. In aggressive digital competition, local reputation alone may not be sufficient to sustain long-term loyalty. Thus, while the pass strategy strengthens symbolic stability, its sustainability depends on continuous value innovation.

Solo Radio FM's marketing communication strategy can be analyzed through Social Exchange Theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Ahmad et al., 2023), which explains that business relationships are sustained when each party obtains benefits proportional to the costs incurred. Solo Radio FM does not merely offer advertising slots, but also provides added value in the form of additional services for long-term advertisers. These incentives enhance perceived benefits and foster loyalty.

Critically, the application of this theory within local media contexts reveals additional complexities. First, perceptions of benefits are subjective and influenced by advertiser expectations. Second, when advertisers expect instant sales growth while radio primarily functions to build brand awareness, an imbalance in perceived returns emerges. Exchange relationships are not purely rational and economic; they are also emotional and symbolic. Therefore, the sustainability of relationships is determined not only by cost-benefit calculations, but also by trust, reputation, and consistent educational communication.

The success of Solo Radio FM's marketing communication strategy is supported by program quality, audience size, media reputation, a personalized approach, service flexibility, and the utilization of digital media. These findings are consistent with Anastasia & Adjie (2020) and Hutapea & Simbolon (2022). However, challenges such as inter-media competition, broadcasting industry dynamics, and differences in advertiser expectations (Salwa & Triyono, 2025) indicate that this strategy operates under significant structural pressures.

Competition is no longer limited to other radio stations, but also includes digital platforms with precise targeting and analytics capabilities. In this context, Solo Radio FM needs to reformulate its value proposition so that it is not solely based on reach, but also on measurable performance. Moreover, post-pandemic industry dynamics have intensified pressure for advertising budget efficiency. Media outlets unable to articulate unique differentiation risk being excluded from promotional spending priorities.

Overall, Solo Radio FM's marketing communication strategy aligns with best practices in radio marketing studies. Optimizing broadcast product quality, strengthening personal selling, and managing image through public relations form the foundation for increasing advertiser numbers. However, the sustainability of this strategy depends on structurally integrating digital transformation, strengthening relationship management systems so they do not rely on individuals, managing advertiser expectations in an educational and strategic manner, and differentiating value amid data analytics-based competition.

Thus, Solo Radio FM's strategy not only represents a normative implementation of pull, push, and pass strategies, but also reflects an ongoing process of value negotiation within a rapidly evolving media

ecosystem. Long-term success is determined by the ability to adapt to industry disruption and reconstruct the meaning of returns within the social exchange between media and advertisers.

CONCLUSION

This research is motivated by increasing competition in the broadcasting industry and the acceleration of media digitalization, which require local radio stations to adopt adaptive and relationship-based marketing communication strategies. The study of Solo Radio FM shows that local radio marketing communication is no longer oriented toward short-term transactions, but toward building sustainable long-term relationships with advertisers.

The findings indicate that Solo Radio FM implements an integrated pull-push-pass strategy. The pull strategy is realized through strengthening program quality, establishing clear audience segmentation, and building listener loyalty as the primary value for advertisers. The push strategy is carried out through intensive personal selling, flexible advertising package design, and negotiations tailored to client needs and budgets. The pass strategy focuses on relationship maintenance through trust-building, service transparency, value-added offerings, and long-term partnership commitments.

Strategically, local radio managers need to position the audience as the core product, implement relationship-based selling approaches, provide flexible advertising models, and strengthen client retention systems through periodic evaluation and reporting. Digital convergence is also a crucial factor in sustaining radio. The integration of on-air broadcasting with social media and digital activities enhances promotional value for advertisers. Digital convergence should be

positioned as a competitive advantage enhancer for local radio, rather than as a threat.

Although this study focuses on a single radio station, the pull-push-pass integration framework based on Social Exchange Theory can be adapted to other regions with similar market characteristics, considering market conditions, levels of digital penetration, and advertiser behavior. The findings confirm that sustainable cooperation between radio and advertisers is determined by the balance between rewards, costs, and perceptions of long-term benefits.

This study is limited by its single-case scope and limited number of informants. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve more informants and conduct comparative studies to obtain stronger generalizations. Overall, relational, adaptive, and digitally integrated marketing communication strategies are key determinants of local radio sustainability amid media industry disruption

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