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From hustle to survival: entrepreneurial speech, class aspiration, and informal labor in Indonesian digital marketplaces

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ABSTRACT

Background: Indonesian digital marketplaces have become crucial arenas where informal selling, platform visibility, and class aspiration are linguistically organized through entrepreneurial vocabularies of access, flexibility, and success. **Objective:** This study examines how public marketplace-related discourse reframes survival-oriented informal labor as entrepreneurial hustle, self-improvement, and upward mobility. **Method:** Using a qualitative corpus-assisted critical discourse design, this study analyzes 49 public text units from Indonesian marketplace, government, and business-information sources through lexical-framing analysis, risk-obscuration mapping, and platform visibility governance mapping. **Results:** Findings show that entrepreneurial opportunity discourse dominates the corpus, positioning marketplace participation as access to buyers, expansion, and scalable business possibility. Risk is rarely foregrounded as insecurity; instead, it is reorganized through language of low capital, manageable fees, seller learning, promotion, and flexibility. Platform visibility emerges as a governing mechanism that encourages sellers to become data-responsive, promotional, and continuously adaptable economic subjects. **Implication:** This study demonstrates that marketplace discourse matters because it makes informal labor socially intelligible as ambition while softening dependence on platform infrastructures. **Novelty:** This study contributes a discourse-based perspective to Indonesian platform labor research by showing how hustle, survival, and aspiration converge within marketplace language.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's digital marketplace economy has become a crucial site where informal labor, entrepreneurial aspiration, and class mobility are publicly narrated. In 2024, APJII reported 221 million internet users in Indonesia, with internet penetration reaching 79.5%, creating a vast communicative infrastructure for small sellers, resellers, platform workers, and home-based entrepreneurs. Micro, small, and medium enterprises remain central to this economy: public reporting in 2024 cited approximately 65 million MSMEs contributing 61% of national GDP. At the same time, Indonesian e-commerce is no longer a peripheral channel but a major economic arena, with gross merchandise value estimated at US$71 billion in 2025 and projected to reach US$140 billion by 2030. The state's recent move to appoint Tokopedia, Shopee, Lazada, and Blibli as income-tax collectors for sellers from August 1, 2026, further shows that marketplace activity has become a governance issue, not merely a commercial practice.

Existing literature has examined digital platforms as infrastructures of opportunity, dependence, and governance. Platform studies show that digital markets can widen entrepreneurial access while also

intensifying algorithmic control, reputational vulnerability, and uneven participation [1], [2], [3], [4]. Research on hustle culture and platform labor demonstrates how flexibility and self-enterprise often conceal exhaustion, self-exploitation, and precarious income [5], [6], [7], [8]. Indonesian scholarship has also linked digital labor to precarity, religious-economic legitimacy, startup identity, and marketplace pragmatics [9], [10], [11], [12], [13]. Yet, less attention has been given to how Indonesian digital marketplace language itself translates informal survival work into entrepreneurial speech, especially through everyday captions, seller education texts, promotional narratives, and platform-facing vocabularies of success.

This study addresses this gap by examining how marketplace discourse constructs informal labor as hustle, aspiration, and self-managed economic agency. It asks how Indonesian digital marketplace texts frame selling as independence, how they convert economic vulnerability into motivational language, and how they make platform participation appear as a route to class mobility without necessarily naming instability, risk, or labor dependence. Rather than measuring seller income or claiming causal effects of platform participation, this study analyzes discourse: lexical choices, pragmatic strategies, semiotic cues, and recurring interpretive patterns across public marketplace-related materials. This focus allows this study to distinguish between what marketplace texts explicitly promote and what their language makes socially imaginable. The central problem is therefore not whether digital marketplaces empower or exploit sellers in a direct causal sense, but how their discourse organizes aspiration, responsibility, risk, and survival into a persuasive entrepreneurial grammar.

This study advances an argument that entrepreneurial speech in Indonesian digital marketplaces does not simply describe business activity; it actively reframes informal labor as a morally desirable project of self-improvement. Terms associated with "business opportunity," "extra income," "flexibility," "small capital," "success," and "independence" may function as linguistic bridges between survival needs and middle-class aspiration. This argument builds on critical accounts of entrepreneurial subjectivity, platform-dependent entrepreneurship, and precarious labor by showing how discourse mediates between structural vulnerability and individual ambition [14], [15], [16], [17]. In this sense, marketplace language matters because it normalizes a specific economic imagination: insecurity becomes flexibility, unpaid promotional work becomes passion, and dependence on platform visibility becomes entrepreneurial agency. This study therefore contributes to sociolinguistics, digital labor studies, and Indonesian economic discourse by clarifying how survival is made speakable as hustle.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Entrepreneurial speech

Entrepreneurial speech refers to language that frames economic action as opportunity-seeking, self-responsibility, risk-taking, and personal transformation. In recent scholarship, entrepreneurship is no longer understood only as firm creation, but also as an ideology that organizes subjectivity, aspiration, and moral worth [14], [6], [17]. Platform economies intensify this logic by encouraging workers and sellers to narrate themselves as autonomous agents, even when their choices are shaped by infrastructure, visibility, and market dependence [1], [16]. Thus, entrepreneurial speech is best treated as a discursive regime, not merely promotional vocabulary.

Its indicators include motivational keywords, opportunity claims, self-branding, success narratives, and risk-minimizing expressions. Studies of digital entrepreneurship show how "flexibility," "innovation," and "independence" become dominant terms for legitimizing uncertain economic activity [18], [19], [20]. Indonesian studies similarly link startup branding, e-commerce pragmatics, and platform discourse to economic identity formation [11], [12], [13]. However, these indicators must be read critically because entrepreneurial language may overstate agency while understating structural constraint. This study therefore examines entrepreneurial speech through lexical framing, pragmatic positioning, and aspirational address.

2.2. Platform labor

Platform labor describes work mediated, organized, evaluated, or made visible through digital infrastructures. Earlier accounts emphasized flexibility and market access, while recent scholarship stresses platform governance, algorithmic opacity, fragmented labor power, and unequal visibility [2], [15], [3], [4]. Studies on gig workers, creators, couriers, and digital sellers show that platform work often combines autonomy with dependency [21], [22], [23]. In Indonesia, research on gig economy precarity complicates celebratory accounts of digital inclusion [10], [24]. Platform labor is therefore both economic arrangement and communicative condition.

The main indicators of platform labor include algorithmic visibility, rating systems, promotional burden, income uncertainty, reputational dependence, and blurred work boundaries. Creator and gig economy studies show that platform participants must continuously perform affective, relational, and promotional labor to remain visible [25], [26], [27]. Research on platform self-exploitation further demonstrates how

flexibility may become intensified responsibility [5], [28], [7]. For marketplace discourse, these indicators appear not only in work conditions but also in language: sellers are urged to optimize, persist, advertise, and adapt as if visibility were purely personal achievement.

2.3. Class aspiration

Class aspiration concerns how people imagine upward mobility, respectability, and a better future through economic participation. It differs from income mobility because it concerns symbolic orientation as much as material movement. Studies of hustle culture, postfeminist enterprise, migrant entrepreneurship, and digital underclass participation show that aspiration often emerges where structural security is limited [29], [30], [31], [32]. Indonesian work on Muslim fashion entrepreneurs, women's livelihood strategies, and rural youth future-making shows similar tensions between hope, labor, and social constraint [9], [33], [34]. Aspiration is therefore ambivalent.

Its indicators include references to success, financial freedom, family support, youth productivity, home-based selling, moral respectability, and "small capital" opportunity. These signs do not automatically prove mobility; they reveal how mobility is made imaginable. Studies on informal market survival, digital marketplace participation, and entrepreneurial education show that aspiration frequently overlaps with vulnerability, especially among small sellers, youth, women, and informal workers [35], [36], [37], [38]. This study positions Indonesian marketplace discourse at this intersection: entrepreneurial speech, platform labor, and class aspiration converge to reframe survival as hustle.

3. METHOD

The unit of analysis is a public marketplace-related text unit that articulates entrepreneurial opportunity, seller identity, informal work, visibility, or economic aspiration in Indonesian digital commerce. Each unit is taken from verifiable public sources and stored with document code, source type, title, date, URL, text type, keyword, quotation, context, and coding fields. This study uses 49 text units collected from official marketplace channels, government portals, and business-information sources. Primary data capture platform-facing marketplace discourse; secondary data provide broader entrepreneurial advice discourse; contextual data establish regulatory and policy background. Visual or video-oriented sources are documented through descriptive visual fields rather than unsupported claims about audience reception.

Table 1. Dataset composition

Code	Data Type	Source	Location	Period	Number	Characteristics	Status
IDM-P	Primary marketplace data	Lazada Indonesia, Shopee Indonesia, Shopee/Google Play, Tokopedia & TikTok Shop Seller, Bukalapak	Indonesia	2021–2026, accessed July 6, 2026	25 text units	Seller onboarding, seller education, advertising advice, exposure work, app listing, seller community identity, platform support, visibility claims	Public, verified, deduplicated
IDM-C	Contextual data	OSS RBA, Kemenko Perekonomian, Kementerian Koperasi dan UKM	Indonesia	2021–2026, accessed July 6, 2026	6 text units	Business legality, KBLI classification, digitalization policy, entrepreneurship ecosystem	Public, verified, deduplicated
IDM-S	Secondary business-discourse data	DOKU, CIMB Niaga, Bank Sinarmas, Evermos	Indonesia	2021–2026, accessed July 6, 2026	18 text units	Low-capital business advice, dropshipping, affiliate work, youth side hustle, payment infrastructure, reseller/pre-order discourse	Public, verified, deduplicated
Total	Combined	Marketplace,	Indonesia	2021–2026	49 text	Public discourse	Ready for

corpus	government, and business-information sources	units	on entrepreneurial speech, informal labor, class aspiration, and platform visibility	qualitative corpus-assisted analysis

This study adopts a qualitative corpus-assisted critical discourse design. This design is appropriate because this study does not measure seller income, platform effect, or causal mobility outcomes. Instead, it examines how marketplace language organizes economic meaning through lexical choices, pragmatic positioning, and platform-mediated forms of address. Corpus-assisted analysis enables systematic comparison across texts, while critical discourse analysis clarifies how opportunity, risk, labor, and aspiration are made socially intelligible. This approach follows recent work on platform governance, digital labor, and entrepreneurial subjectivity, which treats digital markets as communicative infrastructures rather than neutral exchange environments [1], [2], [4].

Information sources were selected for public accessibility, institutional traceability, and relevance to Indonesian marketplace discourse. Primary sources include seller recruitment pages, seller education articles, app listings, official seller channels, and public marketplace social profiles. Contextual sources include government portals on business registration, online retail classification, MSME digitalization, and entrepreneurship infrastructure. Secondary sources include business advice pages that circulate low-capital entrepreneurship, dropshipping, affiliate work, and reseller narratives. This combination allows this study to distinguish platform-authored discourse from policy context and wider business-advice discourse. It also reduces overdependence on one platform and enables comparison across commercial, regulatory, and advisory registers.

Data were collected through public web identification, keyword-based searching, manual source verification, metadata extraction, and deduplication. Search terms included “jualan online,” “seller,” “reseller,” “dropship,” “modal kecil,” “usaha dari rumah,” “tingkatkan penjualan,” “exposure toko,” “iklan Shopee,” “NIB,” “KBLI perdagangan online,” and “UMKM go digital.” Each eligible item was archived as a text unit with short quotation, paraphrased context, URL, date, institution, document type, and deduplication key. Items were excluded when they came from private chats, closed groups, unverifiable screenshots, unrelated buyer reviews, or materials lacking public traceability. Duplicate items were removed through URL, title, and quotation matching.

Data analysis proceeded through three linked instruments. First, lexical-framing analysis identified entrepreneurial keywords, subject positions, modality, and class-aspiration markers. Second, a survival and risk-obscuration matrix examined how low-capital opportunity, extra income, flexibility, home-based work, and informal labor cues soften or displace economic risk. Third, platform visibility and governance mapping traced how marketplace access, advertising, ratings, social-media exposure, seller education, and legal formalization structure seller agency. These stages were followed by cross-reading, interpretive synthesis, and coder-note verification. Claims are therefore limited to discursive patterning within public corpus materials, not generalized conclusions about all Indonesian sellers.

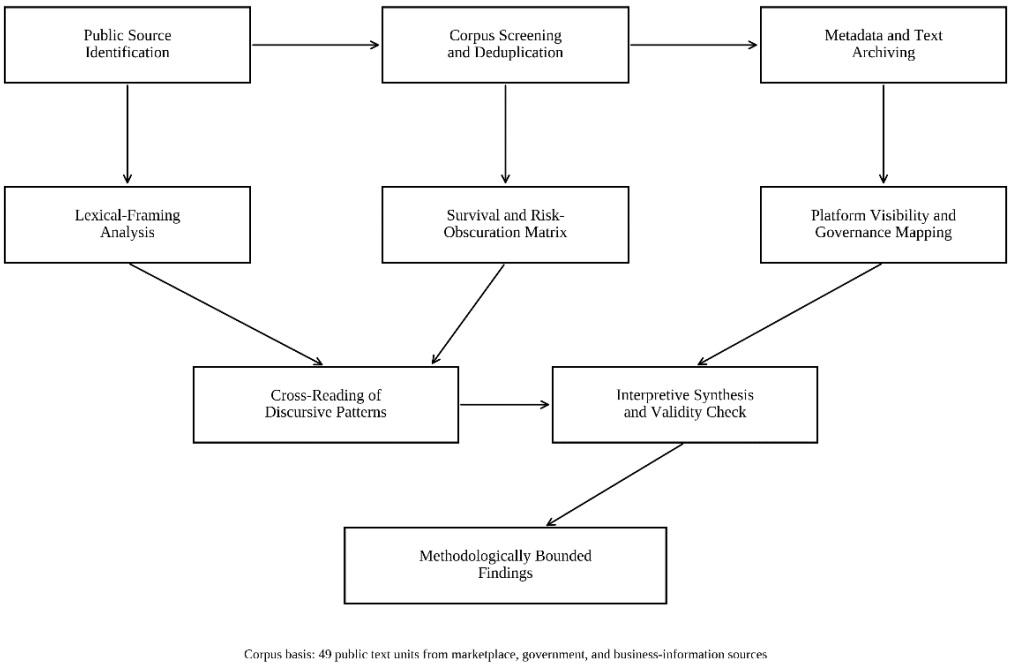


Figure 1. Operational matrix of analysis

4. RESULTS

4.1. Entrepreneurial speech and class-aspirational framing

Marketplace discourse organizes informal selling through a vocabulary of opportunity before it names labor as labor. Across 49 public text units, entrepreneurial opportunity discourse dominates with 28 items, followed by low-barrier entrepreneurial entry with 10 items. This distribution shows that Indonesian digital marketplace language gives priority to access, growth, visibility, and ease rather than to instability, uncertainty, or work burden. The corpus does not present sellers primarily as workers negotiating precarious conditions; it addresses them as market-oriented actors who can enter, learn, optimize, and expand. This pattern is consistent with studies of platform economies that show how digital infrastructures translate economic participation into individualized opportunity narratives [1], [2], [16].

Table 2. Entrepreneurial speech and class-aspirational framing in Indonesian digital marketplace discourse

Main Category	Subcategory	Linguistic Indicator	Frequency	Percentage	Data Variation	Example / Corpus Quote	Data Code	Initial Interpretation
Entrepreneurial opportunity discourse	Market access and growth promise	reach, visitors, buyers, sales, market expansion	28	57.1%	Primary, secondary, and contextual data; strongest in marketplace and business-advice texts	"Anda siap menjangkau 8.000.000 pengunjung harian"	IDM-P-001	Marketplace participation is framed as immediate access to a large economic field.
Low-barrier entrepreneurial entry	Easy, fast, low-cost selling	free, quick registration, small capital, work from home	10	20.4%	Appears in seller onboarding, government entrepreneurship discourse, and business-advice sources	"mulai berjualan dalam 1 menit saja"	IDM-P-002	Entrepreneurial entry is presented as simple, accessible, and minimally risky.
Promotional self-branding	Visibility through content and audience work	trend, influencer, exposure, social media, wider audience	5	10.2%	Appears in marketplace education and secondary business-advice texts	"kolaborasi dengan influencer membuka peluang eksposur"	IDM-P-014	Seller labor is extended into self-promotion and audience-building practices.
Class aspiration / upward mobility	Scaling, prestige, and seller transformation	seller besar, brand awareness, regional market, expansion	3	6.1%	Concentrated in primary marketplace success and expansion narratives	"Berkembang menjadi seller besar"	IDM-P-004	Selling is linked to symbolic upward mobility, not only product exchange.

Datafied entrepreneurial management	Metrics-based seller discipline	data, calculation, daily budget, sales improvement	2	4.1%	Found in seller education materials emphasizing optimization	“melihat data terkini untuk dapat meningkatkan penjualan”	IDM-P-005	Entrepreneurial agency is shaped by calculation, monitoring, and platform metrics.
Formalized business subject	Legal and administrative entrepreneurial identity	NIB, OSS, business permit, compliance	1	2.0%	Found in marketplace-linked legality discourse	“Nomor Induk Berusaha (NIB)”	IDM-P-022	Informal selling is connected to formal business recognition and regulatory identity.

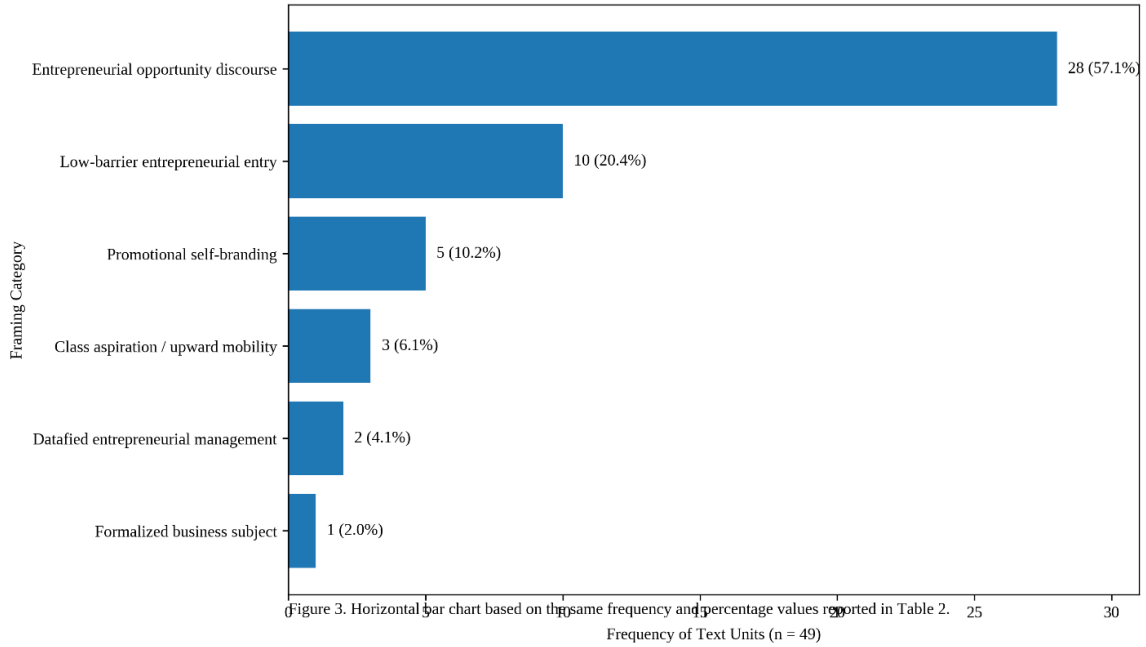


Figure 3. Horizontal bar chart based on the same frequency and percentage values reported in Table 2.

Figure 2. Entrepreneurial speech and class-aspirational framing

The dominant pattern is the repeated conversion of marketplace access into entrepreneurial possibility. Phrases such as “Anda siap menjangkau 8.000.000 pengunjung harian,” “Produk Penjual dapat dilihat lebih banyak calon pembeli,” and “jangkau target pasar lebih luas” foreground scale, traffic, and audience reach as primary economic promises. Low-entry expressions such as “mulai berjualan dalam 1 menit saja,” “mulai berjualan online secara gratis,” and “Peluang Bisnis Online Tanpa Modal Kerja dari Rumah” soften the threshold between informal survival work and entrepreneurial identity. Promotional self-branding appears less frequently, but its presence is analytically important because phrases such as “kolaborasi dengan influencer membuka peluang eksposur” indicate that sellers are expected to perform visibility work beyond selling products.

Entrepreneurial speech in this corpus functions as a class-aspirational grammar: it makes mobility imaginable through access, effort, visibility, and platform participation. The language of “seller besar,” “brand awareness,” and regional market expansion constructs selling as a pathway from small-scale activity toward recognizable business status. Yet this aspiration is not separate from precarity; it is precisely where uncertainty becomes linguistically manageable. As studies of hustle culture and platform labor argue, flexibility and opportunity often coexist with intensified self-responsibility and algorithmic dependence [5], [22], [15], [7]. This corpus therefore suggests that marketplace discourse reframes survival not as deprivation, but as entrepreneurial readiness.

4.2. Survival cues and risk-obscuration in marketplace discourse

The second pattern shows that marketplace discourse does not erase economic vulnerability; it reorganizes vulnerability into the language of opportunity, calculation, and manageable effort. Among 49 text units, unstable opportunity appears in 31 items, making it the dominant risk-obscuration category. Cost exposure appears in 6 items, promotional labor burden in 5 items, while capital constraint, regulatory formalization, daily subsistence market, and operational dependency appear less frequently. The distribution

indicates that marketplace texts rarely foreground survival directly. Instead, they translate uncertain participation into market access, learning, expansion, and seller improvement. This pattern aligns with studies of hustle economies, where insecurity is often made acceptable through narratives of agency and perseverance [5], [8].

Table 3. Survival cues and risk-obscuration across public marketplace-related text units

Main Category	Subcategory	Survival Cue	Risk-Obscuration Strategy	Primary	Secondary	Context	Frequency	Percentage	Example / Corpus Quote	Data Code	Initial Interpretation
Unstable opportunity	Aspiration-led economic entry	Opportunity, growth, market access	Risk minimized through aspiration	14	12	5	31	63.3%	"Anda siap menjangkau 8.000.000 pengunjung harian"; "jangkau target pasar lebih luas"	IDM-P-001; IDM-P-012	Uncertain marketplace participation is framed as scalable opportunity rather than unstable work.
Cost exposure	Fee-dependent selling	Fees, budgets, costs, transactions	Platform costs are itemized but depoliticized	3	2	1	6	12.2%	"Biaya Administrasi, Biaya Pembayaran"; "biaya produksi tetap rendah"	IDM-P-021; IDM-S-005	Economic cost appears as manageable calculation, not as structural vulnerability.
Promotional labor burden	Visibility work	Trends, social media, exposure, influencer collaboration	Visibility work is normalized as seller responsibility	3	2	0	5	10.2%	"ikuti tren yang ada"; "memanfaatkan media sosial"	IDM-P-019; IDM-S-003	Informal sellers are positioned as continuous promoters who must compete for attention.
Capital constraint	Low-capital entry	Free selling, no capital, home-based work	Entry cost is softened through accessibility claims	2	0	0	2	4.1%	"mulai berjualan online secara gratis"; "Tanpa Modal Kerja dari Rumah"	IDM-P-006; IDM-P-007	Capital limitation is reframed as entrepreneurial accessibility.
Regulatory formalization	Administrative legitimacy	NIB, official identity, legal registration	Informality is made administrative	2	0	0	2	4.1%	"Nomor Induk Berusaha (NIB)"; "identitas resmi untuk memulai atau menjalankan usaha"	IDM-P-022; IDM-C-001	Marketplace participation is connected to formal business identity.
Daily subsistence market	Everyday necessity	Routine demand, food, household consumption	Necessity is reframed as opportunity	0	2	0	2	4.1%	"pekerja yang membutuhkan makanan cepat dan hemat"; "usaha yang tidak pernah ada matinya"	IDM-S-006; IDM-S-017	Survival-oriented consumption becomes a basis for informal business opportunity.
Operational dependency	Platform infrastructure	Fulfillment, storage, packing, delivery	Risk is outsourced to platform infrastructure	1	0	0	1	2.0%	"penyimpanan, pengambilan, pengepakan, hingga pengiriman"	IDM-P-010	Platform support reduces operational burden while increasing infrastructural dependence.

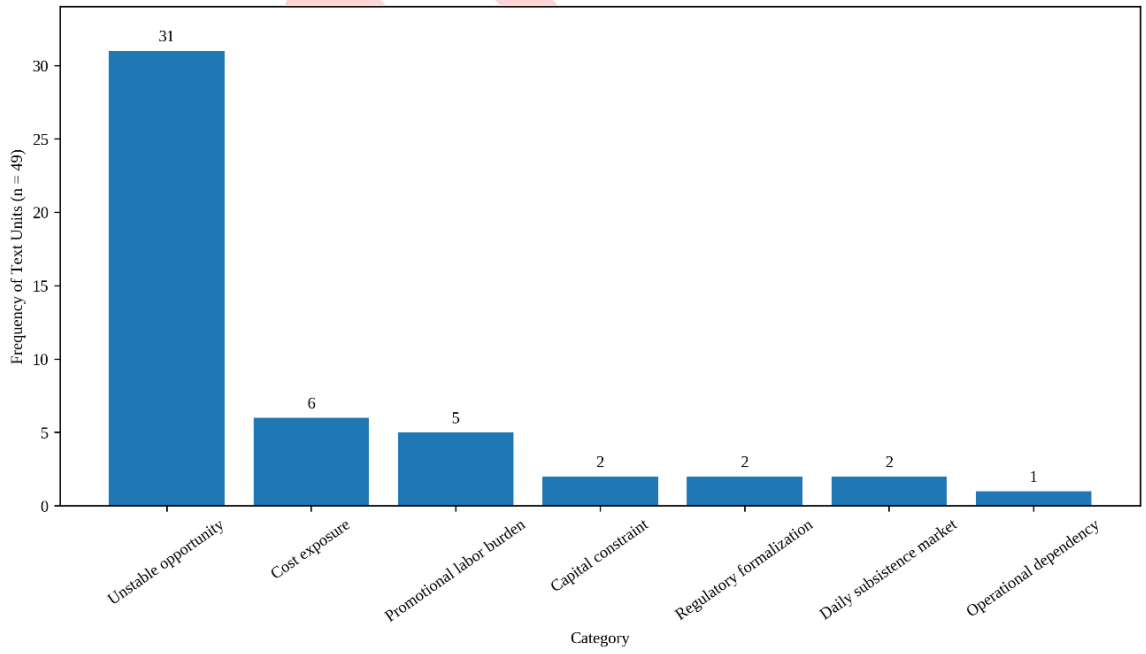


Figure 3. Survival cues and risk-obscuration across data types

The dominant textual evidence comes from phrases that make risk appear small, distant, or solvable. Claims such as “mulai berjualan online secara gratis,” “mulai berjualan dalam 1 menit saja,” and “Peluang Bisnis Online Tanpa Modal Kerja dari Rumah” lower the perceived cost of entry. At the same time, “Biaya Administrasi, Biaya Pembayaran” and “Mulai dari 2–5% dari rata-rata omzet harian” present cost as technical information rather than a burden of platform participation. Promotional pressure appears through “ikuti tren yang ada,” “memanfaatkan media sosial,” and “kolaborasi dengan influencer membuka peluang eksposur.” These phrases show that survival is not narrated as hardship; it is redirected into calculative, promotional, and self-directed marketplace action.

This pattern clarifies how informal labor becomes governable through entrepreneurial language. When risk is described as entry cost, visibility work, or learning requirement, responsibility shifts toward sellers as adaptive subjects. This does not mean that sellers are passive or deceived; rather, marketplace discourse gives them a vocabulary in which uncertainty can be understood as opportunity. Such framing resonates with platform-labor research showing that autonomy and dependence often coexist, especially where workers must manage visibility, metrics, reputation, and self-promotion [22], [15], [28], [4]. This study therefore reads risk-obscuration as a discursive mechanism through which survival work becomes speakable as entrepreneurial readiness.

4.3. Platform visibility and governance mapping

Platform discourse governs informal marketplace labor by organizing what sellers must see, learn, calculate, and perform in order to become visible. Across the same 49 text units, visibility as market access is the most frequent pattern, appearing in 16 items, followed by seller education and optimization in 10 items, paid promotion and advertising in 7 items, and social-media exposure in 6 items. This distribution shows that platform power is not expressed only through direct rules or prohibitions. It is also expressed through instructional, promotional, and infrastructural language that makes visibility appear achievable through seller effort. Such findings are consistent with platform governance literature, which treats platforms as socio-technical systems that regulate participation through metrics, visibility, and behavioral incentives [2], [3].

Table 4. Platform visibility and governance patterns across public marketplace-related text units

Main Category	Subcategory	Governance Indicator	Visibility Mechanism	Primary	Secondary	Context	Frequency	Percentage	Example / Corpus Quote	Data Code	Initial Interpretation
Visibility as market access	Audience reach and traffic promise	visitors, buyers, wider market, reach	Marketplace scale is presented as seller opportunity	9	6	1	16	32.7%	“Anda siap menjangkau 8.000.000 pengunjung harian”; “jangkau target pasar lebih luas”	IDM-P-001; IDM-P-012	Platform visibility becomes the main language through which marketplace access is legitimized.
Seller education and optimization	Training, improvement, and seller discipline	learning, tips, data, improvement, strategy	Sellers are governed through advice, optimization, and self-monitoring	6	3	1	10	20.4%	“melihat data terkini untuk dapat meningkatkan penjualan”; “strategi meningkatkan penjualan”	IDM-P-005; IDM-P-018	Seller agency is framed as continuous learning and measurable improvement.
Paid promotion and advertising	Sponsored visibility	ads, campaign, budget, daily omzet, promotion	Visibility is made available through calculative spending	5	2	0	7	14.3%	“Mulai dari 2–5% dari rata-rata omzet harian”; “Iklan Produk”	IDM-P-015; IDM-P-020	Marketplace exposure is not neutral; it is mediated by advertising instruments and budget logic.
Social-media exposure	Externalized visibility work	trends, influencer, social media, audience engagement	Sellers must extend marketplace activity into content and relational promotion	3	3	0	6	12.2%	“ikuti tren yang ada”; “kolaborasi dengan influencer membuka peluang eksposur”	IDM-P-019; IDM-P-014	Informal selling is linked to platform-adjacent promotional labor.
Logistical/payment infrastructure	Operational enablement	fulfillment, storage, payment, transaction system	Platform infrastructure reduces friction while organizing dependence	1	3	0	4	8.2%	“penyimpanan, pengambilan, pengepakan, hingga pengiriman”	IDM-P-010	Seller autonomy is supported by infrastructural systems that also structure marketplace dependence.
Legal/formal governance	Administrative business identity	NIB, OSS, KBLI, official registration	Informal enterprise is connected to state-recognized business categories	1	0	3	4	8.2%	“Nomor Induk Berusaha (NIB)”; “perdagangan melalui sistem elektronik”	IDM-P-022; IDM-C-002	Marketplace participation is linked to formal economic recognition and regulatory classification.
Community/reputation support	Seller belonging and trust	community, reputation, seller support,	Platform participation is softened	0	1	1	2	4.1%	“komunitas seller”; “membangun	IDM-S-012;	Seller identity is supported through social

	confidence	through collective and reputational language	kepercayaan produk"	IDM-C-005	belonging and reputational confidence.

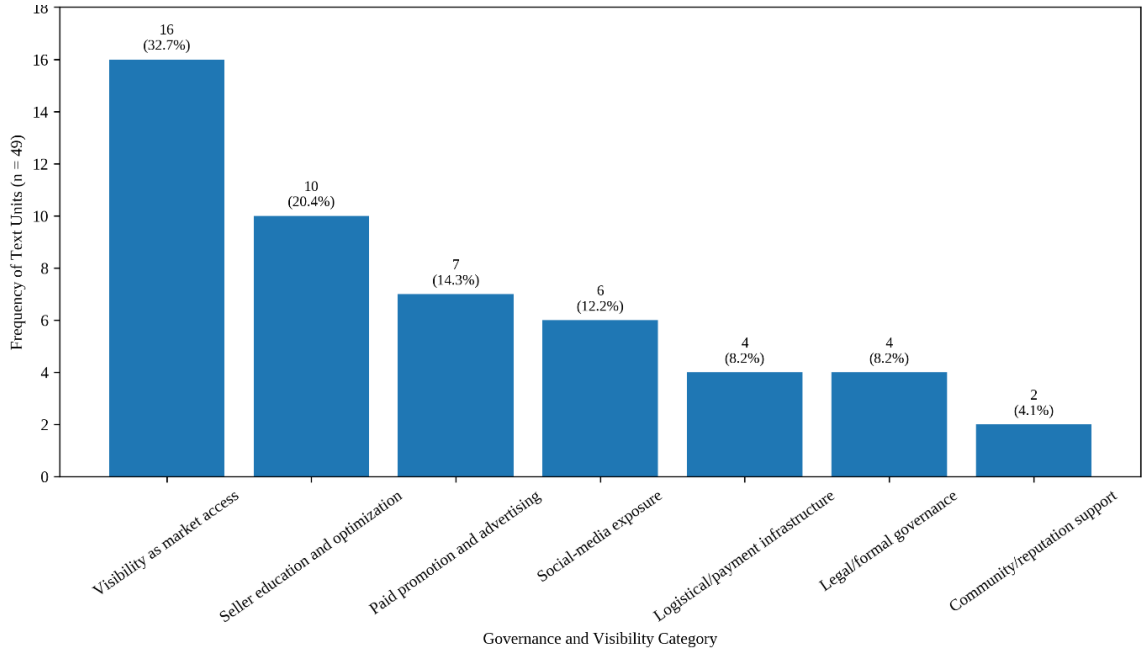


Figure 4. Platform visibility and governance mapping

The strongest evidence appears in phrases that link platform access with traffic and seller improvement. Texts such as "Anda siap menjangkau 8.000.000 pengunjung harian," "Produk Penjual dapat dilihat lebih banyak calon pembeli," and "jangkau target pasar lebih luas" represent visibility as an expandable commercial horizon. Seller education is signaled by expressions such as "melihat data terkini untuk dapat meningkatkan penjualan" and "strategi meningkatkan penjualan," which frame marketplace participation as a continuous optimization project. Paid visibility emerges through "Mulai dari 2–5% dari rata-rata omzet harian" and "Iklan Produk," while platform-adjacent promotional labor appears in "ikuti tren yang ada" and "kolaborasi dengan influencer membuka peluang eksposur." These examples show that sellers are addressed as learners, advertisers, promoters, and data-responsive actors.

This pattern indicates that platform governance works through aspiration as much as through infrastructure. Sellers are invited to imagine marketplace success as a matter of learning, budgeting, adapting, and becoming visible; however, such visibility is never purely personal because it depends on platform rules, advertising systems, search exposure, logistical services, and administrative recognition. This reading extends studies of platform labor that emphasize algorithmic visibility, self-exploitation, and reputational dependency [22], [26], [15], [4]. Within this corpus, entrepreneurial agency is therefore conditional rather than absolute: informal sellers are encouraged to act as independent market subjects while their opportunities remain organized through platform-mediated visibility and governance.

5. DISCUSSION

The first pattern matters because entrepreneurial speech gives informal marketplace labor a socially desirable vocabulary before it gives that labor a secure economic form. When seller-facing discourse emphasizes opportunity, expansion, access, and success, it enables informal sellers to imagine themselves as economic actors with agency, not merely as workers responding to livelihood pressure. This is its function: it produces aspiration, confidence, and symbolic legitimacy in a marketplace environment where participation may otherwise appear marginal or unstable. Yet its dysfunction lies in how this vocabulary can displace attention from unequal starting points, unpaid promotional work, and dependence on platform visibility. This finding supports studies that treat entrepreneurialism not only as economic practice but also as ideology and subject formation [14], [6], [17]. However, it complicates celebratory accounts of digital entrepreneurship because marketplace language does not simply empower sellers; it disciplines how survival should be spoken.

The dominance of opportunity-oriented language can be explained by a deeper structure in which platforms, sellers, and policy discourse share a preference for aspirational economic narration. Marketplace platforms benefit when participation is framed as easy entry and scalable success; sellers benefit symbolically

when their activity is recognized as usaha rather than insecure informal work; policy discourse benefits when digital participation appears aligned with national entrepreneurship and MSME modernization. This creates a discursive convergence, not a proven causal chain, between platform promotion, seller aspiration, and state-supported digitalization. The pattern agrees with Bonina et al. (2021) [1] and Yu and Sekiguchi (2024) [16], who argue that platforms can expand entrepreneurial possibility while also making entrepreneurs dependent on platform architecture. It also resonates with Qosim (2026) [11] and Wulandari (2026) [12], who show that Indonesian market discourse constructs economic identity pragmatically and semiotically. This structure helps explain why aspiration appears more prominently than insecurity.

The second pattern shows that risk-obscuration is not an absence of risk but a linguistic reorganization of risk into effort, calculation, and opportunity. Its function is to make marketplace participation appear manageable: costs become fees, uncertainty becomes strategy, visibility pressure becomes promotion, and capital limitation becomes accessibility. This framing can be useful because it lowers psychological barriers to entry and gives informal sellers practical language for navigating digital markets. Yet its dysfunction is more critical: it individualizes responsibility for conditions that are partly infrastructural, competitive, and algorithmically mediated. This finding extends Ens and Márton's (2021) [5] argument that digital hustle moves from resilience toward erosion, while also aligning with Vieira's (2023) [28] account of self-exploitation in platform work. At the same time, this study does not assume that all low-capital discourse is deceptive. Rather, it shows that accessibility and vulnerability are frequently articulated through the same entrepreneurial grammar.

This risk-obscuration pattern emerges because digital marketplaces must simultaneously attract participation and manage instability without foregrounding instability as a structural problem. The underlying structure is therefore promotional and pedagogical: sellers are encouraged to see risk as something that can be solved through learning, budgeting, advertising, and persistence. This differs from labor-rights discourse, which would name vulnerability through protection, bargaining, security, and entitlement. Instead, marketplace texts translate vulnerability into seller competence. This finding supports Maury (2023) [15], who argues that gig workers' entrepreneurial tendencies are produced through fragmented labor positions, and Yasih (2022) [10], who shows that Indonesian gig precarity is normalized and resisted within neoliberal conditions. It also departs from optimistic digital-entrepreneurship studies that focus mainly on innovation, market access, and business performance [19], [36]. The key issue is not whether marketplace participation offers opportunity, but why opportunity becomes easier to name than dependence.

The third pattern demonstrates that platform visibility operates as a form of governance, not merely as a technical condition of selling. Its function is to organize seller behavior through discoverability, traffic, advertising, optimization, metrics, and reputation. Sellers are not only invited to sell products; they are invited to become data-responsive, promotion-oriented, and continuously adjustable market subjects. This can support business learning and operational improvement, especially for small sellers entering digital markets without formal entrepreneurial training. Yet it also creates a dysfunction: visibility becomes a competitive obligation that sellers must constantly pursue, often through paid promotion, content labor, and adaptation to platform-defined standards. This finding is consistent with Törnberg's (2023) [2] argument that platforms govern through social regulation and with Duffy and Meisner's (2022) [22] account of algorithmic invisibility among creators. It also sharpens Wahid's (2026) [13] Indonesian argument that platform discourse produces entrepreneurial subjectivity under conditions of precarity.

The visibility pattern is structurally grounded in platform capitalism's need to convert participation into measurable, governable, and monetizable activity. Marketplace infrastructure does not simply host sellers; it ranks, teaches, evaluates, and channels them through search exposure, advertising tools, fulfillment services, seller education, and formal registration pathways. This explains why agency appears conditional: sellers are addressed as independent entrepreneurs, but their opportunities are organized through systems they do not fully control. This finding supports Wu and Huang's (2024) [4] integrative review of gig work, which emphasizes heterogeneity and dependence, and Dedema and Rosenbaum's (2024) [3] review of socio-technical issues in platform-mediated work. It also contrasts with studies that treat digital transformation chiefly as entrepreneurial opportunity [18], [20]. For this study, digital marketplaces are best understood as discursive-infrastructural arenas where hustle becomes survival, survival becomes aspiration, and aspiration remains governed by platform visibility.

6. CONCLUSION

This study shows that Indonesian digital marketplace discourse converts informal labor into entrepreneurial speech by framing selling as opportunity, self-improvement, and class aspiration. Its central lesson is that hustle is not merely an economic practice but a discursive arrangement through which survival becomes morally intelligible as ambition. By linking lexical framing, risk-obscuration, and platform visibility within one corpus-assisted critical discourse design, this study refreshes debates on platform labor and digital

entrepreneurship. Its contribution lies in shifting attention from whether marketplaces empower sellers to how marketplace language makes empowerment, insecurity, and aspiration speakable within the same communicative structure.

This study is limited by its reliance on public marketplace-related texts rather than interviews, ethnography, income data, or longitudinal seller experience. Consequently, this study cannot determine how sellers personally interpret marketplace discourse, whether language affects livelihood outcomes, or how platform narratives change across time. Further research should combine discourse analysis with seller interviews, platform-interface observation, and comparative data from urban and rural marketplaces. Future studies may also examine gendered, religious, generational, or regional differences in entrepreneurial speech. Such work would deepen understanding of how Indonesian informal workers negotiate platform visibility, economic insecurity, and aspiration in everyday digital commerce.

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Author states no conflict of interest.

AI USE DECLARATION

The author used artificial intelligence tools to assist with the generation of illustrative figures and with the formatting and layout of this manuscript. AI was not used to generate the substantive content, conceptualization, data, analysis, or conclusions of the research, all of which remain the sole responsibility of the author.

INFORMED CONSENT

Not applicable – this study did not involve direct human participants. Data consisted solely of publicly accessible marketplace, government, and business-information materials from Indonesian sources.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

This research did not involve human or animal subjects; it analyzed publicly accessible marketplace, government, and business-information materials from Indonesian sources, and therefore no institutional review board approval was required. Where research does involve human subjects, the author affirms that such research would be conducted in full compliance with all relevant national regulations and institutional policies, in accordance with the tenets of the Declaration of Helsinki, and would be approved by the author's institutional review board or equivalent committee.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The corpus of publicly accessible marketplace, government, and business-information materials analyzed in this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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