

Communication Strategies of an Instagram Influencer: The Case of Alip Baihak's "Obrolan di Negara Legal"

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Abstract

This study examines Indonesian Instagram influencer Alip Baihak's communication strategies in "Obrolan di Negara Legal" (ODNL) using Onong Uchjana Effendy's framework: audience identification, message construction, communication methods, and media selection. Using a qualitative descriptive design, data were collected through in-depth interviews, Instagram content observation, and documentation of account analytics and posts. Findings show that audience identification relies on shared interests in conversational humor rather than strict demographic segmentation. Message construction involves idea gathering, reference collection, stylistic adaptation, scripting, production, editing, and publication. Colloquial language, humor, emotional expression, opening hooks, and trending topics attract attention and encourage interaction. The dominant method is recreational, prioritizing entertainment while conveying incidental information. Instagram is preferred for its flexibility and existing audience; Reels maximize reach, while Stories facilitate informal interaction. The study highlights interactions among audience interests, creative routines, platform affordances, and engagement metrics, emphasizing that views, likes, and followers do not prove persuasion or attitude change. It recommends systematic audience research, transparent evaluation, and cross-platform comparative studies.

Keywords: *Communication Strategy, Influencer, Instagram, Reels, Recreational Communication, Audience Engagement.*



A. INTRODUCTION

Social media has become an important environment for public communication, entertainment, identity performance, and interaction between content creators and audiences. Unlike traditional mass communication, social platforms combine content distribution with visible feedback mechanisms such as comments, likes, shares, views, and follower growth. These features allow creators to publish material and observe audience responses in near real time. In the context of communication studies, social media therefore needs to be understood not simply as a distribution channel but as an environment in which messages, audience expectations, and platform practices interact (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2023; Pamungkas et al., 2024). Influencers occupy a distinctive position in this environment. Their public visibility is built through recurring content, recognizable communication styles, and relationships with followers. The literature on social media influencers emphasizes that influence is shaped by characteristics of the communicator, audience perceptions, and the social context in which content circulates (De Veirman et al., 2017). Influencers may also develop recognizable personal brands through consistent presentation, narrative

choices, and interactions that make their accounts identifiable among competing creators (Christanti & Cahyani, 2022; Fitriani & Nugroho, 2024; Utami & Christin, 2023).

Yet influencer communication does not always aim to persuade audiences to purchase a product or accept an explicit informational claim. Some accounts primarily provide entertainment. Humor, informal conversation, relatable language, and timely topics can be central to the value offered to followers. Research on creator communication and influencer marketing has examined how social media strategies are shaped by audience approach, content creativity, and platform use (Aprila & Pribadi, 2023; Chaniago & Majid, 2024; Marpaung & Oktavianti, 2023; Praulina & Marlena, 2024). These studies provide useful context, but the communication practices of entertainment-oriented influencers deserve attention in their own right.

This article focuses on Alip Baihak and the Instagram content series “Obrolan di Negara Legal” (ODNL). The case is relevant because the creator describes his dominant approach as recreational and entertainment-oriented rather than explicitly educational. His account combines conversational delivery, humor, topical references, and the platform’s short-video format. The case makes it possible to examine how a creator identifies an audience, constructs messages, chooses a communication method, and selects media features in practice.

The study is organized around Effendy’s communication-strategy framework, which is used in the thesis as four connected components: knowing the audience, constructing messages, determining communication methods, and selecting communication media (Effendy, 2021). This framework offers a practical structure for analyzing the decisions that precede and accompany content publication. It also enables a distinction between the creator’s intended strategy and observable responses such as views or likes. The study asks: (1) How does Alip Baihak understand and identify the audience for ODNL? (2) How are ODNL messages developed and framed? (3) What communication method is dominant in the content and in audience interaction? and (4) Why are Instagram and particular Instagram features selected? By answering these questions, the article aims to provide a grounded case analysis of influencer communication, rather than generalizing from one account to all creators.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Communication Strategy

Communication strategy concerns the deliberate arrangement of communication decisions to support a particular objective. In the framework used in this study, strategy is not limited to the wording of a message: it also includes the intended audience, the method of delivery, and the medium through which communication takes place. Effendy (2021) provides the main analytical framework applied in the thesis.

Cangara (2018) similarly situates communication as a process involving communicators, messages, channels, and recipients, making it useful to consider

content creation as a connected set of decisions rather than isolated posting activity. For an influencer, audience knowledge can be developed through direct experience, observed interactions, and platform analytics. Message construction includes topic selection, framing, language, emotional tone, and the sequence through which a video captures attention.

Communication methods concern the overall mode of delivery, including entertainment-oriented or recreational communication. Media selection concerns the platform and the specific features used to circulate content. These components are interdependent: a conversational style may fit an audience seeking entertainment, while a short-video feature may suit the pacing and visual character of that style (Effendy, 2021; Cangara, 2018).

2. Influencers, Identity, and Audience Relationships

Influencers are visible content creators whose relationship with followers is mediated by recurring publication and platform interaction. De Veirman et al. (2017) discuss the characteristics and impact of social media influencers, including the relevance of follower counts and the context in which influencer content is received.

Studies listed in the source thesis also examine virtual identity and influencer interactions (Candraningrum, 2023), identity construction through Instagram imagery (Christanti & Cahyani, 2022), influencer personal branding (Fitriani & Nugroho, 2024; Utami & Christin, 2023), and micro-influencers' approaches to audiences (Chaniago & Majid, 2024). These perspectives suggest that a creator's recognizable persona is constructed through more than popularity alone.

The style of speech, recurring topics, visual presentation, and the tone of interaction can all help establish an identifiable account. For the present case, personal branding is not treated as a separate measured variable; instead, it provides contextual language for understanding how consistent communication practices can distinguish ODNL from other content.

3. Social Media and Instagram as Communication Environments

Social media platforms offer creators a combination of publishing, distribution, and feedback tools. Kaplan and Haenlein (2023) are cited in the thesis in relation to social media theory, while Pamungkas et al. (2024) address digital communication through social media. Instagram's profile, Reels, Stories, and interaction functions can serve different practical purposes. A profile gives an overview of a creator's public identity; Reels supports short-form video distribution; Stories offers a more temporary and informal mode of sharing; and likes, comments, tags, and reposts make audience response visible.

Prior works included in the thesis consider Instagram marketing communication (Aprila & Pribadi, 2023), communication strategies involving influencers (Marpaung & Oktavianti, 2023), and creator creativity in social media content (Praulina & Marlina, 2024). Although these studies are not identical to ODNL's entertainment-oriented focus, they help situate platform choice and creative

execution as strategic decisions. The present analysis therefore treats Instagram not as a neutral container but as a set of affordances that the creator uses selectively.

4. Recreational Communication and Content Engagement

Recreational communication is the dominant method identified in this case. It prioritizes entertainment, amusement, and a relaxed experience for the audience. ODNL's creator explicitly states that the primary aim is to entertain rather than to focus on education or information. This distinction matters because the success criteria for entertainment content may differ from those for instructional or public-information content. T

he creator evaluates performance through observable metrics such as views, likes, and followers, which are useful indicators of reach and interaction but do not independently establish comprehension, trust, or attitude change. Research on food-vlogger communication and engagement (Deo et al., 2025), influencer communication strategies (Chaniago & Majid, 2024; Marpaung & Oktavianti, 2023), and personal branding among comedian-influencers (Utami & Christin, 2023) provides a relevant research context for examining how content style and audience response intersect. In this article, engagement metrics are interpreted cautiously: they are part of the creator's practical evaluation process, not a direct causal measure of persuasion.

5. Analytical Model

The article applies the four-part framework from Effendy (2021): (1) audience identification, (2) message construction, (3) communication method, and (4) media selection. The framework is used deductively to organize interview and observational material. At the same time, themes emerging from the case—such as the use of hooks, selective follower interaction, and the division of functions between Reels and Stories—are retained as empirical details rather than forced into abstract categories.

Table 1. Analytical Framework Adapted from Effendy (2021) and Applied to the Case Evidence

Analytical Component	Guiding Question	Evidence Considered
Audience identification	Who is the content intended for, and how is the audience understood?	Interview statements; audience analytics shown in the thesis; recurring content interests
Message construction	How are ideas, topics, language, and video structure developed?	Interview statements about references, scripting, hooks, humor, and trending topics
Communication method	How is the content delivered and how does the creator interact?	Interview statements on recreational communication, verbal/nonverbal delivery, comments and reposts
Media selection	Why Instagram and which features are used?	Interview statements and screenshots of account analytics/content formats

C. METHOD

The study uses a qualitative descriptive design, consistent with the source thesis. A qualitative approach is appropriate for examining how a content creator explains and interprets their communication decisions, while descriptive analysis organizes these accounts around the research questions. The methodological orientation follows the qualitative research guidance cited in the thesis (Moleong, 2021; Sugiyono, 2021). The case is Alip Baihak's Instagram account, @alipbaihak, particularly the ODNL content series. The research was conducted from April to June 2026, with an interview held at Alip Baihak's residence on 1 June 2026, as documented in the interview appendix. The article retains the original case boundaries and does not claim to represent the entire Indonesian influencer ecosystem. Data collection involved three techniques reported in the thesis: an in-depth interview, observation, and documentation. The interview explored the creator's perspectives on audience characteristics, message development, content purposes, follower interaction, platform selection, and success indicators. Observation focused on the public Instagram account and ODNL content format, while documentation included account screenshots and available analytics reproduced in the thesis.

Combining these sources provided contextual detail for interpreting interview statements, although the source material does not describe formal, independent coding of every published post. Data analysis organizes the evidence according to the four components of Effendy's framework (2021), compares interview statements with documented Instagram material, and develops descriptive interpretations for each component. The thesis cites Moleong (2021) and Sugiyono (2021) for qualitative methodology and Sugiyono (2024) regarding documentation. The findings should be interpreted as a single-case qualitative analysis rather than statistically generalizable results, as the thesis does not report systematic multi-coder procedures, a complete corpus size for posts, or quantitative statistical tests. Regarding ethical considerations, the source thesis includes a publication-permission statement naming Alip Baihak as the research participant and identifies the account examined. The article uses selected interview statements and descriptions of public-facing content relevant to the research questions. Because the subject is a named public creator and the study concerns his professional communication, interpretations are restricted to the communication practices described in the thesis. Before journal submission, the author should confirm that participant consent covers publication of interview excerpts and reproduced screenshots in an English-language journal.

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Audience identification: shared interests over demographic targeting

The findings indicate that Alip Baihak does not primarily define ODNL's audience by a narrow age or gender category. Instead, he emphasizes the shared interest of people who enjoy the series' conversational and humorous style. This is a form of interest-based audience identification: the creator's working assumption is that the content attracts people who recognize or enjoy its tone and topics. The case

therefore presents two complementary modes of audience understanding. The first is qualitative and experiential: knowing which topics and styles are likely to resonate with the account's followers.

The second is platform-based: observing the analytics available through Instagram. The combination can support practical decisions, although the source material does not show that demographic analytics are used to define a formal segmentation model. This finding is consistent with the communication-strategy emphasis on knowing the audience before constructing and distributing a message (Effendy, 2021).

2. Message Construction: References, Hooks, Humor, and Topical Relevance

The thesis describes a production process that begins with seeking ideas or references, adapting the idea to the creator's own content identity, preparing a script, producing and editing the video, and publishing it. The workflow suggests that ODNL is not simply spontaneous conversation captured without preparation. Rather, informal delivery is supported by a sequence of creative decisions before publication. Language is a central part of the message strategy. Alip uses everyday, non-formal expressions and a conversational register that resembles ordinary peer interaction. This style makes the content feel less like a formal lecture and more like a casual conversation. Humor and emotional expression further shape the tone. The creator also refers to the use of a "hook" at the beginning of a video to capture attention, which is particularly relevant in a feed where viewers can quickly move to another post.

Topical relevance is another recurring strategy. According to the interview material, content connected to issues that are widely discussed tends to receive stronger engagement. The creator's reasoning is practical: topics already circulating in public conversation are more likely to be recognized and clicked on by viewers. The thesis also reports that information may sometimes be embedded within entertainment content, including a reference to information about cannabis benefits, but Alip stresses that ODNL ultimately functions primarily as entertainment. The article does not validate the accuracy of any such incidental information; the finding concerns the creator's stated message strategy.

These practices combine three functions: attracting attention, maintaining the creator's recognizable voice, and linking content to issues familiar to audiences. Related studies in the thesis discuss content creativity and influencer communication in marketing contexts (Praulina & Marlena, 2024; Marpaung & Oktavianti, 2023). ODNL extends this discussion to entertainment content, where topicality and humor are presented as primary drivers of audience interest rather than as instruments for a commercial call to action.



Figure 1. Instagram Profile of @alipbaihak Reproduced from the Source Thesis. The Image is Included as Contextual Documentation, Not as an Independent Measure of Influence

3. Communication Method: Entertainment as the Primary Objective

The clearest finding is the creator's explicit identification of ODNL as recreational content. In the interview, Alip says: "Aku kreatif dong. Justru itu menghibur. Aku nggak pernah fokus buat ngasih informasi, edukasi gitu" ["Recreational, of course. It is meant to entertain. I have never focused on providing information or education"]. This statement indicates that entertainment is not merely a stylistic layer placed over an educational objective; it is the principal purpose of the series as described by the creator.

Alip also explains that recreational communication is easier for the public to accept and carries a lower perceived risk of error than content that explicitly positions itself as educational. This is the creator's account of his decision-making, not an endorsement of entertainment as a substitute for accurate information. Indeed, when a creator introduces factual claims into an entertainment format, audiences may still interpret those claims as information. A responsible strategy therefore requires care when dealing with sensitive or consequential topics, even if entertainment remains the main objective.

The content combines verbal and nonverbal communication. Spoken language and captions are accompanied by facial expression, intonation, bodily movement, and visual performance. These elements reinforce the conversational tone and contribute to the recognizable style of the series. The thesis interprets this combination as a multimodal approach in which meaning is conveyed through more than words alone.

Audience interaction is selective rather than intensive. Alip explains that he does not engage constantly with followers but reposts Stories when users tag him. This form of acknowledgment gives followers a visible route to interaction without

requiring continuous one-to-one communication. The creator also considers mass communication more effective for the account because the content is designed for a broad entertainment audience. The practical indicator of success is described in numerical terms—views, likes, and followers. These metrics help the creator assess distribution and interaction but do not, by themselves, establish whether viewers understood or agreed with a message.

4. Media selection: Instagram, Reels, and Stories

Instagram is selected as the main platform for reasons that combine perceived flexibility and an established audience base. Alip states that Instagram provides more room for uploading and imagining content than TikTok, as he perceives the platform's rules. He also notes that the market for his content has already formed on Instagram, making uploads more effective there. These are the creator's own platform assessments; the study did not independently compare platform policies or algorithmic performance.

Within Instagram, Reels is identified as the principal format for ODNL because the creator believes that this is where the audience expects the series and where content can reach users beyond existing followers. Stories serve a different function, particularly for informal, everyday sharing and interaction. The feed is not described as the central format in the creator's workflow. This division suggests a functional platform strategy: Reels for discovery and distribution, Stories for informal presence and follower acknowledgment.

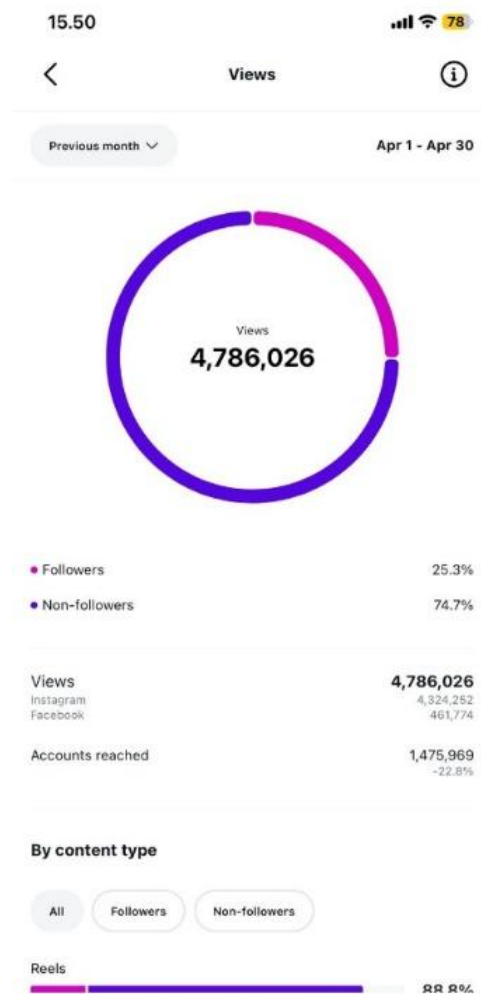


Figure 2. Account-level engagement/analytics screenshot included in the thesis. Exact values and the measurement window should be verified against the original account before journal publication.

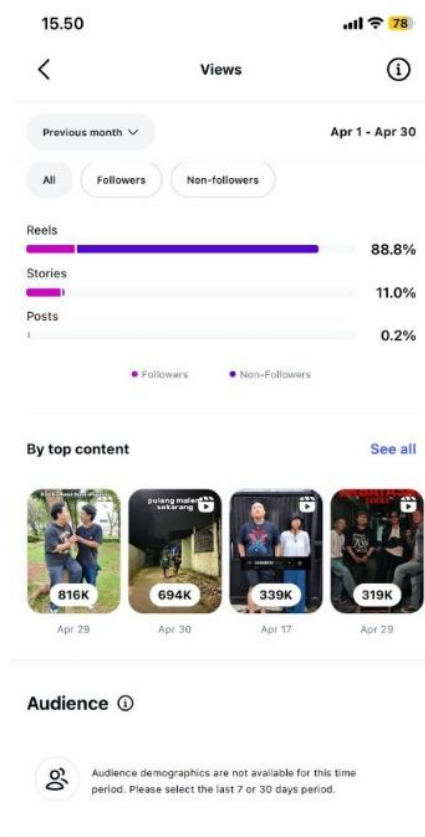


Figure 3. Instagram audience/content analytics reproduced from the source thesis; interpreted here as contextual evidence of the creator's use of platform metrics.

The interview also emphasizes that platform audiences differ in their behavior and that trends can circulate across several social networks. Alip describes trends as a reason that similar topics may appear on multiple platforms at the same time. In this sense, trends function as a visibility opportunity, while the choice of Instagram is shaped by the creator's existing audience and accumulated experience.

The thesis documents a previous loss of an Instagram account, which the creator attributes to reports against content related to a public incident. Although the earlier account loss removed an established follower base, the creator subsequently developed another account. This experience highlights a practical vulnerability of creator-led communication: visibility and audience access depend partly on a platform account that the creator does not fully control. The finding supports the value of diversifying audience relationships, although the source study does not assess alternative channels in detail.

Table 2. Synthesis of the Case Findings Based on the Interview, Observation, and Documentation Reported in the Thesis.

Strategic Component	Observed Practice	Interpretation and Boundary
Audience	Interest-based understanding; use of Instagram insights	Audience knowledge combines experience and analytics; no formal demographic segmentation is demonstrated.
Message	Idea/reference search, adaptation, scripting, editing, hooks, humor, everyday language, topical issues	A structured production process supports an informal tone; topicality is associated by the creator with higher engagement.
Method	Recreational communication; verbal and nonverbal performance; selective reposting and interaction	Entertainment is the stated primary goal; interaction is present but not continuous.
Media	Instagram as main platform; Reels for main content; Stories for informal sharing	Platform choice reflects an established audience and creator perception; the study does not independently compare algorithms or policies.

The case demonstrates that the four components of Effendy's communication-strategy framework—audience, message, method, and medium—are interconnected and mutually reinforcing (Effendy, 2021; Cangara, 2018). Alip Baihak's interest-based audience identification supports a conversational message style, recreational communication, and Instagram short-video distribution. His strategy combines intuition, experience, current topics, and visible analytics, although the study does not establish how frequently metrics influence content decisions. ODNL's informal language, humor, expressive delivery, and recurring conversational patterns contribute to a recognizable personal brand, consistent with research on Instagram identity and personal branding (Christanti & Cahyani, 2022; Fitriani & Nugroho, 2024; Utami & Christin, 2023).

Although entertainment remains the primary objective, incidental information may also emerge, highlighting the importance of distinguishing humor, opinion, and factual claims when addressing consequential topics. This does not establish that ODNL systematically disseminates misinformation. The creator evaluates success through views, likes, and followers, which indicate exposure and observable interaction but cannot independently demonstrate message comprehension, trust, attitude change, or persuasion. Despite the thesis's conclusion regarding engagement effectiveness, the qualitative evidence provides no controlled comparison or independent longitudinal analysis to establish causality. Previous studies on

influencer characteristics and impact (De Veirman et al., 2017; Deo et al., 2025; Marpaung & Oktavianti, 2023) provide broader context, while this case extends discussion to non-commercial entertainment content. Instagram dependence also creates potential vulnerability to account loss, reporting behavior, and access changes, suggesting the value of alternative audience contact channels and lawful content archiving, although the study does not establish whether these measures are currently implemented. Reels primarily support distribution, whereas Stories facilitate informal interaction, reflecting differentiated platform functions (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2023; Pamungkas et al., 2024). Overall, the study contributes a case-based application of a classical communication framework to contemporary short-form content and distinguishes creator intentions, observable engagement, and actual audience effects. Future research should combine interviews, systematically sampled posts, audience interviews, and cross-platform comparisons to investigate content performance and audience interpretation more comprehensively.

E. CONCLUSION

This study analyzed Alip Baihak's communication strategy in the Instagram series ODNL using Effendy's four-part framework. The findings show that audience identification relies primarily on shared interests in conversational and humorous content, complemented by Instagram insights. Message development involves idea gathering, adaptation, scripting, production, editing, and publication, while everyday language, humor, emotional expression, opening hooks, and trending topics attract attention. Recreational communication predominates, combining verbal and nonverbal elements with selective follower interaction. Instagram is preferred for its flexibility and established audience, with Reels supporting reach and Stories facilitating informal sharing. Overall, the strategy demonstrates coherence among audience, message, method, and media choices. However, views, likes, and follower counts indicate engagement rather than proving persuasion or audience change. Practically, creators should align content with audience expectations, use analytics alongside experience, distinguish humor and opinion from verifiable information, and maintain alternative audience contact channels responsibly. Limitations include the single-case design, one in-depth interview, and the absence of a complete coded post inventory, independent analytics verification, and follower interviews. The findings are therefore not generalizable to all influencers or evidence of causal effects. Future research should compare creators and platforms, systematically sample posts, investigate audience interpretations, and examine relationships between engagement, comprehension, trust, and attitude change.

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