

# Can celebrity comedians make any jokes? Unlocking the nature of humour among Indonesian celebrity comedians on social media

**Ismail Tahir**

School of Foreign Languages, Beihang University, Beijing, China  
[ismailtahir@ubmg.ac.id](mailto:ismailtahir@ubmg.ac.id)

## Abstract

*Although humour on social media has attracted much attention in discourse and communication studies, little research has investigated this context among Indonesian celebrity comedians. Moreover, humour among celebrities on social media has become a prominent element of online communication. This study examines the nature and humour strategies among Indonesian celebrity comedians on social media. The data were collected from three kinds of social media, YouTube, TikTok, and Facebook, and analysed using NVivo software to code and visualise the data. The findings indicate that Indonesian celebrity comedians employ four humour categories on social media: self-branding, sharing opinions, engaging in interpersonal discussions, and sharing personal lives. Importantly, self-branding is the most frequently employed category by Indonesian celebrity comedians, in which they develop a clear and consistent brand identity, share their expertise, engage with their audiences as well as fans, and maintain their professional presence. Finally, the implications of the current study provide us with insights and understandings about the nature of humour in the digital environment, particularly on social media. Therefore, the present study's findings offer insightful and positive implications among Indonesian celebrity comedians on social media, including increased engagement, a more relatable brand image, and better engagement with fans.*

*Keywords: nature of humour, discourse, Indonesian celebrity comedians, humour on social media, language on social media, communication.*

## 1. Introduction

In general terms, humour can be defined as a communicative phenomenon that involves individuals perceiving something as amusing, entertaining, or funny (Assagaf, 2023; Goddard, 2017; Silvia et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2023). It is subjective and may differ between individuals due to underlying cultural differences, personal experiences, and cognitive traits (Buie et al., 2022). Humour can also be interpreted as a situation that is an absolute necessity for people to

defend themselves in sustaining life and challenging stigma (Lash, 2022). Therefore, the existence of humour as a means of entertainment is consequently important. Humour can continuously appear as a refresher as well as conditioning the soul and channelling feelings of anxiety, in which humour contributes to reducing anxiety and social problems (Güldal et al., 2022). Humour can also provide wise and entertaining insight and convey sarcasm or criticism with a touch of laughter (Cheang and Pell, 2008). This concept can be a persuasive tool to facilitate the input of information or messages to be conveyed seriously and formally (Duskaeva, 2021).

Several studies have investigated humour as funny jokes to make people laugh (Beck, 2009; Kramer, 2011; Westbury et al., 2016). However, Anne Pomerantz (2021) argued that although humour can make people laugh, it is no laughing matter from a linguistic perspective since humour in a particular setting, particularly in education, is quite challenging. Omolabi (2022) also stated that humour not only makes people laugh but also makes social commentary on certain problems that target specific citizens' mindsets. It can take the form of providing such information to society, for instance, humour that is used to comment on political issues. Addas (2022) investigated insult analysis in the form of humour in a political context through stand-up comedy shows. Their findings suggest that the stand-up comedy show entertained the audience and provided information and criticism regarding political issues. Thus, comedy serves as a unique and influential tool in political communication, affecting one's opinions, engagement, and knowledge regarding political issues. In addition, it is suggested that humorous information attracts disproportionate attention on social media platforms (Davis et al., 2018).

Moreover, Najda-Janoszka & Sawczuk (2020, p. 50) emphasised that the digital context, such as social media, may relate to a humorous discourse as a particular potential. Several studies have explored the use of humour on social media. Ge (2019) explored a semiotic perspective to investigate social media-based visual humour in tourism marketing. This study adds to the body of tourism literature and humour theory and gives travel companies a comprehensive understanding of how to use social media-based visual humour to reach and engage audiences. Gal (2019) investigated the application of irony to social media boundary work. It implies that ironic humour's inherent polysemy and decontextualised digital contexts increase the possibility of misinterpretation, which turns amusing exchanges into dividing tools. It indicated that the medium (Facebook), keying (ironic humour), and content (social differences) all work together to marginalise one group and empower the other, thereby widening already existing social gaps. In addition, it also demonstrates how the triangle creates a brand-new, generalised societal split between intellect (associated with leftists) and physicality (associated with rightists) that provides an impact on relations between irony and power structures in digital environments. Hussein and Aljamili (2020) identified and examined certain semiotic patterns in COVID-19-related parodies and memes on Jordanian social media. By analysing the data from a social-semiotic perspective, humour may be used to persuade as well as to lighten the sad atmosphere brought on by the Pandemic. In relation to persuasive context, Kasmani (2022) presented the findings about persuasive political humour on social media. It reported that humorous political messages could entertain and improve the self-image of society, particularly among the younger generation (Kasmani, 2022, p. 1-2).

In the context of Indonesian celebrity comedians, humour has gained scholarly attention in the context of stand-up comedy (Afidah & Wahyudi, 2014; Reyta & Susanti, 2019; Indarti, 2020) in online communication. These studies explore linguistic aspects, including opening and closing remarks and conversation analysis. In addition, the performances of Indonesian

stand-up comedy highlight social criticism to address social issues, where they offer insights into the uniqueness of humour discourse characteristics in the local contexts (Irena & Rusadi, 2019; Leonardo & Junaidi, 2020). The creation of humour, language use, and identity in Indonesian stand-up comedy emphasises valuable insights into the structure and delivery of the comedic content (Satria Raharja & Rosyidha, 2019). Therefore, cross-cultural studies of conversational humour have highlighted the mechanisms of linguistic-discursive, pragmatic functions, and interactional-sequent resources.

In the background illustrated above, humour is considered an important aspect of discourse and language communication, particularly on social media. This is because social media has become an outlet for humour (Rasmussen, 2017). However, most studies have mainly focused on politics (Kasmani, 2022), education (Kusmanto et al., 2020), tourism marketing (Ge, 2019), as well as organisational identity (Rasmussen, 2017). Furthermore, the context of humour among Indonesian celebrity comedians on social media has not yet been explored. Therefore, the present study aims to provide and add to the growing literature on discourse and language communication of humour nature and its strategies among Indonesian celebrity comedians on social media. In addition, the present study refers to Indonesian celebrity comedians who are known for their ability to employ comedy and satire to entertain, engage, and enlighten their audiences. These Indonesian celebrity comedians possess an understanding of social and cultural contexts. They also have a knack for making others laugh through various social media platforms, including Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Language use in social media

The use of language in social media has been studied through various types of research because social media is becoming a bigger part of our everyday communication. Nugraha et al. (2021, p. 600) state that maintaining a digital presence is crucial for language revitalisation, which can be a concern among linguists. Online communication has changed the way people speak in a number of ways. In fact, the usage of multiple languages online typically qualifies as hybrid, and language distinctions are frequently muddled. Because of an increase in technological advancements over time, several social media platforms have embraced various linguistic idioms as a way of communication. Acronyms, abbreviations, symbols, and other language variants that deviate from the conventional conversation are a part of this language style (Mercy & Christa, 2020).

Even though social media allows for the freedom of self-expression, abusive language has a profoundly detrimental social impact. Yin and Zubiaga (2022) investigated how often content is classified as abusive, offensive, or normal by models that recognise abusive language. They also examined the effects of choices made during the dataset construction stage in the creation of abusive language detection models using three commonly used abusive language datasets where this 3-way categorisation is feasible. Budiasa (2021) also investigated the slang language on social media since slang is a phenomenon of language use that develops as a result of linguistic growth as well as a social dynamic in society. For instance, *bahasa gaul*, or informal language in Indonesian, is a common form of communication among young people. *Bahasa Gaul* is an Indonesian term that translates to “slang language” in English. This term refers to an informal language that is commonly used in everyday conversation, especially in interactions on social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Slang terms are also frequently employed by YouTubers and *Celebgrams*. *Celebgrams* are

defined as celebrities who post photos or videos on Instagram, and their posts can influence trends and public opinions. Therefore, their presence on the social media significantly influences their usage among members of both global and local audiences (McLellan, 2022).

In addition, the influence of social media on language usage is not limited to online communication, but it also impacts the teaching and learning process. This is because social media platforms often promote casual communication, such as emojis, acronyms, and hashtags, that can influence language usage in educational contexts. The social media context provides a relaxed setting for communication where the students may experiment with a second language (Lantz-Andersson, 2018) while paying close attention to the regionally coordinated framing. In these framings, language play was exploited for a variety of socialising goals. Thus, social media can be considered a beneficial activity for fostering language competence and preparing students for L2 use outside of the classroom. Moreover, the maintenance and revival of endangered languages may gain from a social media presence through worldwide exposure. Deschene (2019) investigated the possibility of teaching Coptic online utilising social media platforms, showing that social media gave Coptic language learning materials a global audience and that respondents to the poll accepted them favourably into their daily lives. Furthermore, learning languages through social media can facilitate interactive communication in which language learners employ multilingual resources to make sense of the humour of a particular target language (Chik, 2020). In this context, language learners may engage themselves in humorous content in the target language in various activities such as reading jokes, watching comedy shows, and listening to stand-up comedy that allow them to practice language comprehension in an engaging and fun way.

## **2.2 Humour on social media**

Regarding its inception, humour has been recognised as a method of easing tension and stress (Oluseun and Omolabi, 2020; Haq et al., 2021). To date, humour on social media has been attracting the researchers' interest as a virtual environment that is relatively new to this age-old social practice, engaging with Web 2.0 technology still in its teenage years – and Web 3.0 still the tantalising unknown to come (Ishihara, 2023). Aytuna and Çapraz (2021) found that the convergence of humour on social media is a potential counterforce to the digital evidence that allows disinterested individuals to avoid political information. Moreover, humour on social media promotes exposure to many political viewpoints and develops into a powerful persuasion tool for political communication. For instance, political subjectivities are partly formed and subverted through humour (Haq et al., 2021). It also often relates to the potential for humour to trivialize serious issues by diverting attention from the main aspects of economic, social, and sexual justice, as well as uninhibited interpretation of memory policies (Eiroa, 2022). In addition, Al-Qudah and Abu Hait (2022) explored the employment of rhetorical techniques in 25 jokes made by Jordanian social media users. It showed that various rhetorical techniques were used to draw attention to several important political, social, and psychological concerns in the cultural context. In an effort to make people laugh, social media users produce humour using techniques like satire, pun, irony, exaggeration, definition, ignorance, rigidity, disappointment, reference, and absurdity, as social media humour does not only serve personal needs but it provides cultural spaces and the community at large (Bradley, 2015; Frenda et al., 2022).

Furthermore, humour on social media serves various important social functions that go beyond entertainment, and it is of practical importance when social media users feel empowered to voice their opinions and critique (Oluseun and Omolabi, 2020). The creator of

the humour eliminates and reinforces status disparities and improves the sense of community among people. Humour is presented as a mockery of the people's social, economic, and health experiences. Thus, it can be said that humour makes people laugh and makes statements that provoke discussion (Yuan & Shen, 2022) about societal conditions. In other words, it addresses a relevant and serious social problem (Dynel, 2020; 2021) in online communication knowledge (Taecharungroj & Nueangjamnong, 2015; Chen, 2022).

Recently, social media users have used memes and other humorous posts to manage their public image and encourage community interaction with their content on social media (Wood & McGovern, 2021). In line with memes as humour on social media, sarcasm, witticism, and puns were utilised frequently in the responses to the original tweets, with sarcasm serving as the primary form of humour. It was also noted that Twitter users employ humour more frequently than Facebook and Instagram users (Fubara 2020). Humorous memes are also well-liked ways to empower citizens in political expression, but there are also worries about their possible risks. Penney (2020) suggests that sharing political memes and comedy online has a variety of advantages, including strengthening community identification, forging connections with like-minded peers, and furthering understandable and effective political critiques. These favourable evaluations, however, are complicated by worries about the connection between political humour and the risks of trivialisation and hyper-polarisation, which prevent some users from participating in its dissemination and prompt them to look for substitute forms of online engagement that are viewed as more civically valuable.

### **2.3 Being popular celebrities on social media**

A common strategy for celebrities and microcelebrities (Duffy & Kang, 2020) is to use the media for a dual, i.e., commonplace and spectacular, performance, connecting the exotic world with that of the everyday. Celebrity expresses a very specific type of public identity that is more or less connected to the extensions of the self beyond one's core activity and into the complicated aspects of publicity, renown, and into a wider, and by its very definition, popular culture (Marshall, 2020) since the concept of self-branding and microcelebrity serve engagement in enhancing the visibility and influence among celebrities on social media.

In relation to the existence and popularity of celebrities on social media, many companies collaborate with celebrities to market their products or services, particularly on social media. This collaboration helps every celebrity to represent a brand that is carefully matched to the celebrity's image and is also seen as more reliable and trustworthy (Citra & Harahap, 2019). In addition, celebrities are considered to have more wealth, power, brand image, and status (Agnihotri & Bhattacharya, 2020) to influence and endorse the products or services to appeal more to customers. Ahmad et al. (2019) examined the effects of young celebrity endorsements in social media marketing and brand perception on young customers' purchase intentions. The use of theoretical framework from Shimp's TEARS model showed that new information marketing for companies about young celebrity endorsements in social media commercials appeals to most young customers. In particular, the model recommends that businesses build their brand image through social media advertisements and celebrity endorsements.

Furthermore, the concepts of emotional attachment and authenticity benefit from the results of word-of-mouth and purchase likelihood, for instance, the customers' communication with celebrities on social media (Kowalczyk & Pounders, 2016), as well as the possible antecedents and outcomes that could emerge from such interactions. It is suggested that consumers follow celebrities on social media to learn about their lives and careers, according to textual analysis of the focus groups. Thus, following celebrities on social media was found

to have authenticity and emotional attachment benefits. Social media celebrity is also defined by contrived authenticity, controlled audience connection, the prevalence of celebrity people, and cultural obsession with self-sufficient uniqueness (Hou, 2019). Raun & Christensen-Strynø (2021) argues that it is necessary to express self-branding practices and strategies reflecting the authenticity among celebrities to be popular on social media (ibid., p. 1800). In the political aspect, celebrities also encourage citizens as examples of the emergence of politics. Loader et al. (2016) emphasised that the use of social media by politicians and celebrities is usually seen positively by the public, but many people believe that in order to regain the public's trust and credibility, they need to learn how to utilise it properly.

### **3. Research method**

The present study collected data from three social media platforms: YouTube, TikTok, and Facebook. The researcher looked up every uploaded content related to humour or comedy content in the Indonesian context using the Indonesian language. The data was collected in the period of three months (December 2022-February 2023). All the contents were published during and before 2022 (the links are provided in the video link section).

In collecting the data, the researcher collected humorous content created by Indonesian celebrity comedians. The content was mainly about TV programs uploaded to YouTube, TikTok, and Facebook. Data consisted of videos related to comedy content. Then, the researcher manually typed the data into documents by numbering each sentence related to humour employed by Indonesian celebrity comedians.

During data collection, the researcher screened and verified the authenticity of the data (Bruhn, 2021) to ensure that the humorous content among Indonesian celebrity comedians shared and uploaded on such social media was not fake or manipulated. Since the data collection was carried out for three months, the researcher selected a diverse range of sources and content types from those three social media platforms and collected data over a sufficient period. Furthermore, the researcher also assessed the data quality by considering some factors such as the data's relevance, accuracy, and completeness. Therefore, the researcher reviewed all the material (N=275). Some materials that were unrelated to the present research topic about humour categories (see Table 1) were omitted. After the screening and verification, the researcher retained 243 instances of humour types based on their categories employed by Indonesian celebrity comedians on social media. When this part was completed, the collected data was ready to be analysed.

The collected data were then analysed using NVivo software to help the researcher code, visualise, and report the findings (Bazeley & Richards, 2011). Before coding the data, all the data had to be imported into this software. Moreover, the data were in the form of text documents, such as transcripts of humour collections from TikTok, YouTube, and Facebook. Before importing the files, the researcher had to review the import settings to ensure that all data matched the research requirements. The files were also reviewed to ensure that they were correct and complete. Once the data were imported, the researcher organised them into appropriate folders and classified them with nodes, classifications, and other attributes that could help the researcher manage and analyse those data. In addition, the imported data were coded independently by the researcher. Adopting Marshall's (2020) work on celebrity identity has been useful for supporting the coding of the data into the "nature of humour" (Marshall, 2020, p. 89). Thus, the coding process has been divided into four adopted categories of humour type (Holton & Lewis, 2011) on social media, including self-branding, sharing

opinions, engaging in interpersonal discussions, and sharing personal lives. These categories are briefly defined in the working definitions below.

Table 1. The working definition of humour categories among Indonesians on social media

Nature of humour	Working definition
<i>Self-branding</i>	Indonesian celebrity comedians actively and intentionally shape and show a distinct image and identity through humour on social media, representing who they are both personally and professionally as celebrities, which can be a reflection of their values, skills, experiences, and unique qualities.
<i>Sharing opinions</i>	Indonesian celebrity comedians express their thoughts, beliefs, and viewpoints on various topics through humour on social media.
<i>Engaging in personal discussions</i>	Indonesian celebrity comedians participate in conversations about personal topics, experiences, and interests through humour on social media that can cover a wide range of subjects, such as everyday life updates to more profound and meaningful exchanges.
<i>Sharing personal lives</i>	Indonesian celebrity comedians share various aspects of their personal lives, experiences, and activities through humour on social media. These personal lives involve their day-to-day life, interests, and significant life events that are accessible to other people, including their friends, followers or fans, and even the wider public.

By considering those four categories of humour, the researcher also considered the humorous content employed by Indonesian celebrity comedians on social media. The researcher defined clear categories of “nature of humour” by adopting Machlev & Karlin’s (2016) work to determine the content of the humour, including (a) disparaging humour-targeting celebrities (e.g., making fun of celebrities on social media), (b) disparaging humour-targeting others (e.g., making fun of an audience), (c) offensive humour (e.g., sexual jokes), and (d) self-disparaging humour used in terms of laughing about oneself (Wanzer et al., 2010). Moreover, the researcher considers the contexts found on social media that are related to humour employed by Indonesian celebrity comedians by examining the linguistic features, such as wordplay and puns (how Indonesian celebrity comedians employ clever wordplay, homophones, or double meanings), incongruity (how Indonesian celebrity comedians use a discrepancy between what is being expected and what is being stated, which leads to humour), satire and irony (Indonesian celebrity comedians employ the opposite from the actual meaning of the stated words), exaggeration and hyperbole (exaggeration for comedic effect), surprise and twist, sarcasm (Indonesian celebrity comedians deliver or provide an unexpected twist or surprise), and nonsensical language (Indonesian celebrity comedians use absurd or nonsensical language to create humour). Therefore, the researcher identified 243 instances that meet the criteria of the current study. Moreover, the data analysis is illustrated in the following figure.

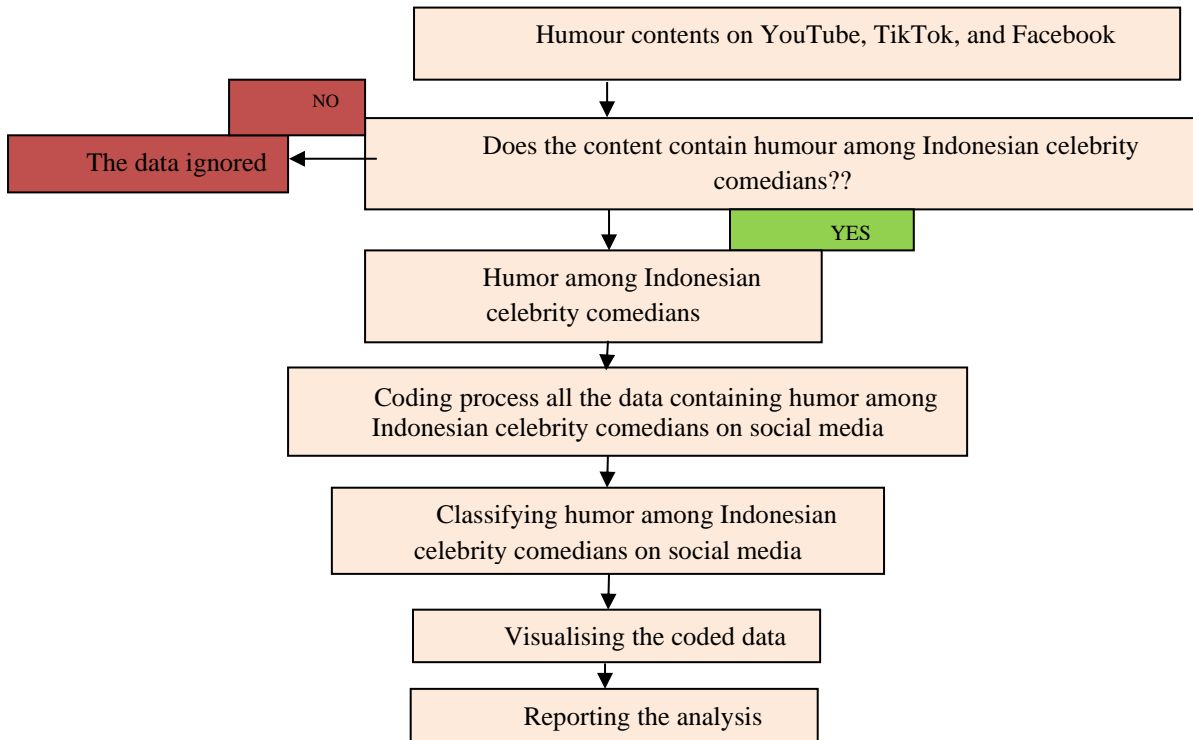


Figure 1. Data analysis scheme of humour among Indonesian celebrity comedians on social media

Figure 1 shows how the researcher deals with the data analysis procedures. All the collected data had to be identified to determine whether or not it contained humour among Indonesian celebrity comedians. If the data met this requirement, it would be assigned to be analysed. On the other hand, the data would be ignored if they did not meet the research criteria. Then, the researcher created the nodes of the data segments and named each node, describing its humour in the current study. Once all the data had been coded, they were customised for visualisation by selecting the settings for data visualization type. As a final step, the analysed data would be ready to be reported by interpreting those data visualisations to draw insights from research data.



#### 4. Findings

The findings of the current study show that Indonesian celebrity comedians employ four kinds of humour, as shown in Figure 2.

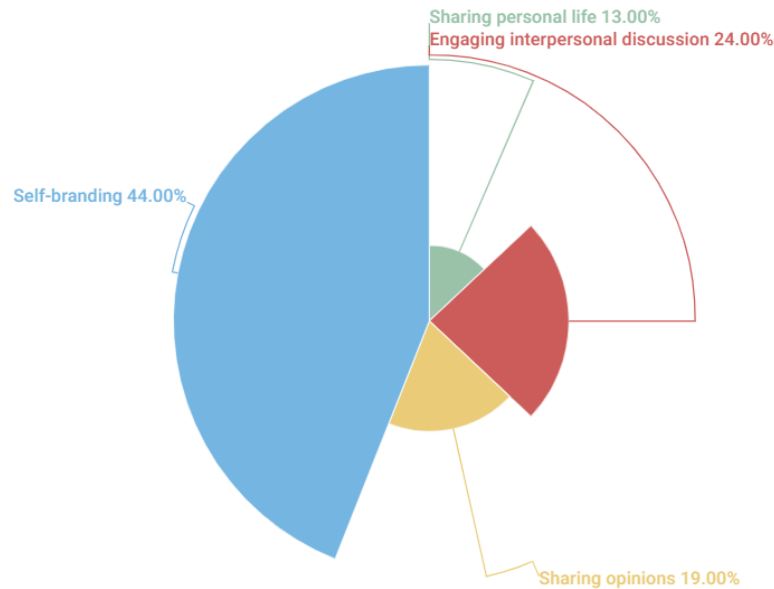


Figure 2. Percentage of humour among Indonesian celebrity comedians on social media

Moreover, Figure 2 can be illustrated in detail in Table 2.

Table 2. Frequency and percentage of humour among Indonesian celebrity comedians on social media

Humour among Indonesian celebrity comedians	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sharing personal life	32	13
Engaging interpersonal discussion	58	24
Sharing opinions	46	19
Self-branding	107	44
<b>Total</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>100</b>

As can be seen from the table above, there are four kinds of humour among Indonesian celebrity comedians on social media. Self-branding (44%) is the most frequently employed by Indonesian celebrity comedians, followed by engaging in interpersonal discussion (24%) with 58 occurrences. The data indicates that self-branding through humour among Indonesian celebrity comedians can effectively engage their audiences and create a memorable impression. Indonesian celebrity comedians also strike a balance between being humorous and professional. In addition, using humour to engage in interpersonal discussion among them can also be a great way to build rapport, diffuse tension, and create a positive and collaborative environment on the show they are performing, especially on social media.

Furthermore, sharing opinions is 19%, and 13% is indicated by sharing their personal life. These findings are illustrated in the following explanations. In this case, Indonesian celebrity

comedians use humour naturally to engage with others and share their perspectives in a memorable and engaging way. They also try to make their humour in the form of sharing their personal life in a way that is relatable to their audiences or viewers. They also try to find a common experience that their audience/viewers can relate to and use as the basis of their humour. Table 3 and Figures 3,4 and 5 illustrate the details of the data obtained from each social media (Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube).

Table 3. Frequency and percentage of humour among Indonesian celebrity comedians on each social media

Social Media	Nature of humour among Indonesian celebrity comedians							
	<i>Interpersonal discussion</i>		<i>Sharing opinions</i>		<i>Sharing personal life</i>		<i>Self-branding</i>	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Facebook	16	7	24	10	0	0	63	26
TikTok	10	4	12	5	29	12	12	5
YouTube	32	13	10	4	3	1	32	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>44</b>

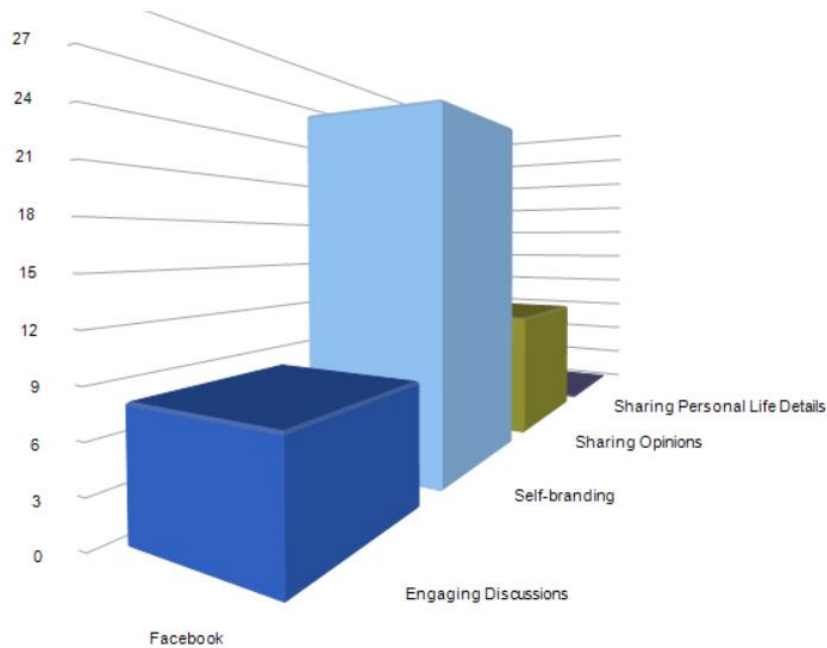


Figure 3. Percentage of humour among Indonesian celebrity comedians on Facebook

Figure 3 shows that self-branding (26%) is the most frequently used, followed by sharing opinions (10%) and engaging in interpersonal discussions (7%). However, it is found that 0% of celebrities share personal life details on Facebook.

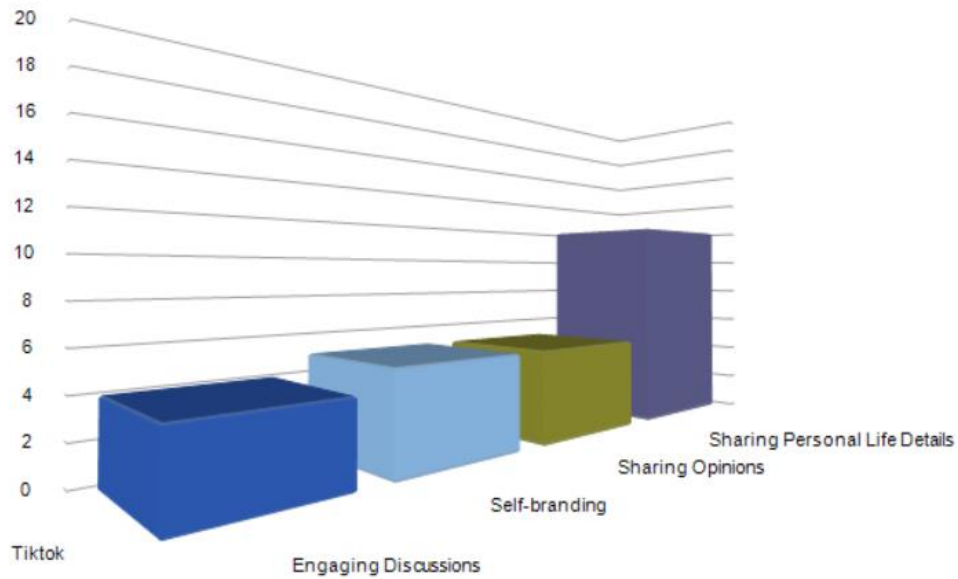


Figure 4. Percentage of humour among Indonesian celebrity comedians on TikTok

Figure 4 shows that sharing personal life (12%) ranks highest among the types of humour among Indonesian celebrity comedians on TikTok. Self-branding and sharing opinions are equally placed (5%), and engaging in interpersonal discussion is 4%.

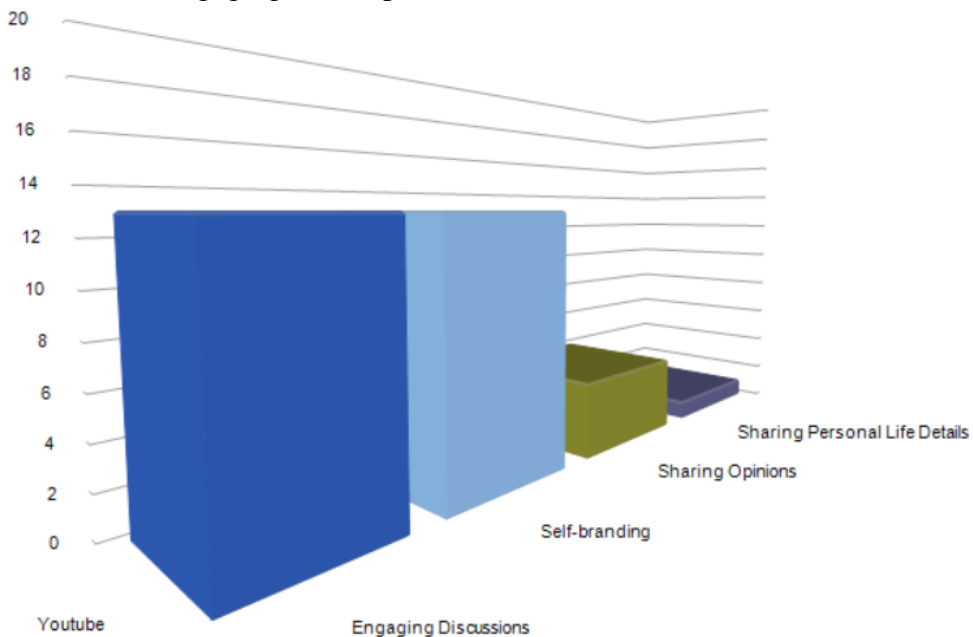


Figure 5. Percentage of humour among Indonesian celebrity comedians on YouTube

Figure 5 shows that self-branding and engaging in interpersonal discussions account for 13% of the total. Sharing opinions is 4%, and sharing personal life is at the bottom of the scale (1%). The following subsections analyse each type of humour among Indonesian celebrity comedians on social media in more detail.

#### 4.1 Self-branding

In the current study, self-branding is defined by how Indonesian celebrity comedians present themselves to others, especially Indonesians as their fans. This is related to how they show their unique comedic style and persona to actively craft and promote a distinct identity on social media through humour. A successful personal brand is also defined when Indonesian celebrity comedians can create a consistent impression on their audience. This includes a combination of the skills and experience they have with the personal values they hold, as illustrated in Figure 6 below.



Figure 6. A unique self-branding from Rina Nose

Figure 6 shows self-branding presented by Rina Nose, a famous female celebrity who always performs differently from other celebrities on every show, depending on the shows she performs. Certainly, the example above indicates the narration of the program set by the creative team. This Indonesian celebrity comedian appears as a flight attendant due to the creative team's preference. Moreover, she shows her personality by being involved in unique stories so that viewers are happy to witness the event. This content was posted on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022, and liked more than eight thousand times. It also has been viewed more than 361 thousand times. Some illustrations of the content above are as follows. As this celebrity shows her unique comedy style, she also shows disparaging humour targeting celebrities and others. She uses this kind of humour in a mocking or derogatory manner to make fun of celebrities and audiences during the show by showing her appearance and behaviour.

- (1) **Man 1:** *Halo mbak. Kami Band Ungu. Kami nanti akan naik pesawatnya mbak. Kalau boleh tau namanya mbak siapa?* (Hello, lady. We are Ungu band. We will be getting on your plane. By the way, can you please tell us your name?)  
**Man 2:** *Ntar, ntar. Bisa gak kita ganti pesawat?* (Wait, wait. Can we change our flight?)  
**Man 1:** *Kenapa?* (Why?)

**Man 2:** *Pramugarinya.....* (The flight attendant is.....)

**Man 1:** *Namanya siapa mbak?* (What is your name lady?)

**Flight attendant:** *perkenalkan nama saya Adel..... mau tau nama panjangnya?* (Well, my name is Adel..... would you like to know my full name?)

**Man 1:** *Nama lengkapnya siapa?* (Sure, what is your complete name?)

**Flight attendant:** *Adel ta kodel kodel (penonton tertawa)* (My full name is Adel Kodel Kodel...) ((the audience are laughing)).

The conversation illustrates that Rina Nose, as a flight attendant, acts with a unique appearance that is different from that of a common flight attendant. She also uses a unique name, attracting the audience's attention by telling her name, Adel Ta Kodel Kodel, as her full name. She also convinces people who are talking to her about her skill and capability, as shown in minutes 1:30 to 1:35: *Inilah kelebihan saya. Topi bertumpuk, alis bercere* (This is my strength. I have stacked hats and divorced eyebrows). This personal brand simply tells the story as well as boosts her online reputation. For instance, she describes her strength, but she adds some incongruous phrases, such as stacked hats and divorced eyebrows that she made to prepare her appearance. Thus, successful self-branding occurs also when Indonesian celebrity comedians can make a unique impression on the people around them. Building a personal brand takes time and effort. However, the importance and the need for self-branding, especially in building a career, will continue to increase. It is something that no one can take from them. It is what makes them unique, and it describes what they stand for. Moreover, the data above also show that Indonesian celebrity comedians using humour on social media are consistent in defining their brand as professional celebrities during show performances. In addition, it can also be seen that each of them shows their authenticity and engages with their audiences as well as the viewers of their content.

#### 4.2 Engaging in interpersonal discussions

Interpersonal communication is considered very effective for changing the behaviour of others if there are similarities regarding the meaning being discussed. The special sign that exists in this interpersonal communication of the current study lies in direct feedback. This feedback flow has an easy-catching power for Indonesian celebrity comedians both verbally in the form of words and non-verbally in the form of body language such as nods, smiles, frowns, and so on. Figure 7 illustrates how Indonesian celebrity comedians use their humour in the form of engaging and encouraging interpersonal discussions during their conversations on a show.



Figure 7. Engaging in interpersonal discussions between Ayu Ting Ting and Wendy

Figure 7 shows that there is a reciprocal relationship between these celebrities in terms of communication. During their conversation, they talk to each other, pretending to be a mother and a son, arguing about what is happening to both of them. For instance, Ayu Ting Ting acts as a mother who asks Wendy why he is wearing that pair of shoes. The shoes do not look good on him. In return, the son asks the mother why she looks like that, putting on makeup and having that hairstyle. By looking at this scenario, they have an interaction of sharing information and feelings between them. Therefore, the feedback occurs and does not cause misunderstandings in their communication, especially given the nature of their humour that is disparaging celebrities and self-disparaging. The script can also be illustrated as follows:

- (2) 0:33 – 0:44 : *Wendy Wendy Wendy, mama kan udah bilang jangan pernah kamu pakai sepatu itu ya. Tuh lihat inisialnya C (cebok). Jorok kamu ya* (Wendy, Wendy, Wendy. I have told you not to wear that pair of shoes. Look at that initial C (cebok/wipe). You are so dirty huh
- 0:46 : *Kenapa sih Ma?* (What is wrong with that?)
- 0:48 – 0:52 : *Apa ini? Mama udah mulai pelupa gaga-gara kena tipes rambut mama ini* (What is this? I started to become a forgetful person because of my typhoid hair).

The scenario above indicates the spontaneous humour between those two celebrities talking about their appearance. The concept of engaging in interpersonal discussions can begin with a command or even raising a question. In this case, Ayu Ting Ting complained to Wendy about his shoes. The humour is evoked when she says: *Tuh lihat inisialnya C (cebok)*. The letter C represents the word *cebok* “to wipe.” It refers to the act of cleaning oneself after using the toilet, especially the anal area, with water, which is a common practice in Indonesia. In this context, the word plays on a literal meaning to create a joke related to personal hygiene practice, cleanliness, or bathroom habits. Therefore, the audience laughs since Wendy’s shoes are associated with wiping. As this illustration is considered an engaging interpersonal discussion and can be categorised as self-disparaging, it is because there are words that reveal problems or

personal behaviour that are quite sensitive when discussed. It involves self-criticism or self-mockery for the comedic effect that those two celebrities make.

### 4.3 Sharing opinions

In its application in everyday life, the purpose and use of sharing opinions is to express opinions or ideas from another person's point of view about a phenomenon that is happening. In the current study, sharing opinions through humour is considered an effective way to engage audiences and convey a message in a light-hearted manner.

As illustrated in the following figures, Indonesian celebrity comedians are mindful of the potential risks and implications of using humour to share their opinions.



Figure 8. Sharing opinions and giving information to bike riders and drivers.

The celebrity in Figure 8 clearly informs the audience and shares his thoughts by giving advice to all drivers. He said that it is not recommended to pass Pancoran City at midnight since most statues often squat on their own. This humour indicates the possibility that the statues move at Pancoran at midnight since it is known that Pancoran city has one such dynamic monument called the Tugu Pancoran, also known as the Pancoran Monument, which is located at the intersection of Jalan Jenderal Gatot Subroto and Jalan Mampang Prapatan. The monument was built in 1976 to commemorate the victory of Indonesian forces over the Dutch in the Battle of Sudirman in 1949. Another example of sharing an opinion is also illustrated in the following utterance.

- (3) *Jika seseorang menyebutmu jelek, jangan putus asa, karena belum tentu orang itu berbohong*  
(If someone says that you are ugly, do not take it personally because that person is not necessarily lying).

While it is true that humour can sometimes involve poking fun at someone's physical appearance, it's important to remember that hurtful or offensive utterances should never be excused as "just a joke." It is common among Indonesian celebrity comedians, as the utterance shows above, to call someone ugly, regardless of whether it is meant as a joke. It is important to highlight that Indonesian celebrities set boundaries and communicate their feelings in a calm and respectful manner, including the nature of humour they make, which can be seen when she says: "Do not take it personally because that person is not necessarily lying." This humour aims to entertain their audiences during the show as is evident by the fact that all their audiences, as well as viewers of that content, react positively. Thus, these Indonesian celebrity comedians consider that it is important to be mindful of the impact of their words on their audiences/viewers and to strive to use humour and other forms of communication in a respectful and inclusive way.

#### 4.4 Sharing personal life

In the current study, using humour to share personal life among celebrities is considered a great way to connect with their audiences or viewers. They tend to use humour appropriately and sensitively to their viewers. In this case, they show that they do not take themselves too seriously, which can help them create a comfortable feeling when sharing their personal life with their viewers. The following figure shows how Indonesian celebrity comedians naturally share their personal lives through humour.



Figure 9. Sharing personal life through humour

Figure 9 shows that these celebrities humorously provide information about their interpersonal situations, such as relationships, interactions, and even engagement with others to their viewers, so that the utterances conveyed by these celebrities are included in sharing interpersonal relations, e.g. when they act as announcers and cleaning service officers. In this case, they talk about their personal identities, such as their name and where they live. For instance, one of them says that her name is *Ayu Debita alias Depok Betawi asli*. Her family name *Depok Betawi Asli* means this celebrity originally comes from *Depok Betawi*, which is a



term used to refer to the indigenous Betawi community that resides in the city of Depok, located in West Java, Indonesia. The Betawi people are an ethnic group native to the Jakarta region and surrounding areas, and they have a distinct culture and language that sets them apart from other ethnic groups in Indonesia. The term *Depok Betawi*, therefore, refers to the Betawi culture and identity that has developed within the city of Depok. Another example of sharing personal life through humour is illustrated below.

- (4) *Rina, apakah kamu sudah bercerai dua kali? Itu artinya kamu jelek*  
(Rina, have you divorced twice? That means you are not beautiful).

The utterance above is being asked of Rina Nose, who is a famous celebrity in Indonesia. The humour content above is expected to include information about Rina's personal life and her marriage. She was asked whether she had been divorced twice. If yes, it means she is not beautiful. It is not appropriate or respectful to make jokes at the expense of someone's personal experiences, especially if they involve divorce, since divorce is a serious and sensitive issue that should not be trivialised or used as a basis for making jokes. In addition, divorce can be a difficult and painful process for anyone, regardless of their appearance or other qualities. However, in this case, the joke of having a divorce during their talk is acceptable, gaining more reactions from their audiences or viewers.

## **5. Discussion**

Based on the findings above, the study shows that there is a lot of humour and light-heartedness among Indonesian celebrity comedians. This humorous content is shared through social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok to entertain their fans using funny memes, jokes, and other humorous content. They also frequently engage in playful banter and teasing each other, which can be entertaining to watch. One popular form of humour among Indonesian celebrity comedians on social media platforms is parodying, covering popular songs, and talk shows in the form of videos. It can be enjoyable for the audience, as it actively interacts with the show speakers through the humour they make. This can range from creating a humorous parody or cover of a popular song to dubbing funny voices over viral videos, as well as having a talk show about viral content happening at that moment that can rely on interactions with both textual and visual elements (Wood & McGovern, 2021). This type of humour is often shared widely on social media and sometimes can quickly go viral (Dyner, 2020; 2021) since it can be seen from the number of likes, comments, or even the views of every content video they have shared.

Another common form of humour among Indonesian celebrity comedians is using sarcasm and irony to make fun of everyday situations and trends (Cheang and Pell, 2008). By using language that is unexpected or contradicts the reality of the situation, they create a sense of amusement and playfulness that their fans can relate to. However, Frenda et al. (2022) argued that irony is considered to be insensitive in hateful contexts, generally moved by negative emotions. While sarcasm frequently uses derogatory language to emphasise its aggressive goal, it is categorised as a communicative strategy linked to metalinguistic abilities (Gal, 2019).

Moreover, celebrities often use social media to share funny observations and commentary about everything from politics to pop culture. They are known for their sense of humour and ability to connect with fans through their funny and relatable content since humour can have higher engagement on social media in terms of audio-visual promotion, particularly to reach more audiences (Ge, 2019). In addition, humour among Indonesian celebrity comedians often

reflects the diverse and vibrant culture of Indonesia and helps to bring people together in a positive and entertaining way (Assagaf, 2023; Goddard, 2017; Silvia et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2023). Thus, the findings in the current study have also shown that there are four kinds of humour employed by Indonesian celebrity comedians on social media, including showing personal brand, engaging in interpersonal discussion, sharing opinions, and sharing personal life.

As described, Indonesian celebrity comedians tend to show their personal brand through humour as they build their brand to connect with their audiences and showcase their personalities. This could be a creative strategy to gain immense prominence primarily due to its potential to hold audiences since it is a big challenge to deliver brand communication completely (Agnihotri & Bhattacharya, 2020) to the intended target audiences and the particular community (Bradley, 2015). By sharing funny anecdotes and engaging with online audiences, they establish themselves as influential figures in the entertainment industry. Furthermore, sharing opinions often indicates humorous content (Holton & Lewis, 2011) among Indonesian celebrity comedians on social media. Indonesian celebrity comedians cannot only engage in interpersonal discussion but also share their opinions in the humorous form. They use humour as a way to express their thoughts in a light-hearted and entertaining way that will engage their audience. In addition, they might say one thing but mean the opposite or use sarcasm to make a point. By using humour to share their thoughts, they can make a serious topic more approachable and encourage their audience to think critically about important issues, as sharing opinions through humour can help people to assert themselves as eloquent and knowledgeable (Taecharungroj & Nueangjamnong, 2015; Chen, 2022).

By employing humour on digital platforms, Indonesian celebrity comedians are allowed to connect with their audiences in a more relatable and entertaining manner by engaging in interpersonal discussions. The humour strategies employed by Indonesian celebrity comedians are considered the tools to lighten the mood and create a sense of camaraderie with their fans because humour can help carve out a space for open discussions and critical reflections (Penney, 2020; Yuan & Shen, 2022). The engagement in interpersonal discussions makes them feel at ease and creates fun during their shows. Furthermore, one way Indonesian celebrity comedians show their character as a celebrity through humour is by sharing funny and relatable stories from their everyday lives, which is in the form of sharing personal life (Holton & Lewis, 2011). This could be anything from a funny encounter with a fan to a humorous mishap on a film set. By sharing these personal stories, celebrities are able to connect with their fans in a more intimate way and show that they are just like everyone else, particularly on social media since social media has become a strategic space for those users, including celebrities, to extend their influence in the digital environment (Duffy & Kang, 2020). By sharing funny and personal stories, they are able to connect with their audience on a more personal level and create a more engaging and enjoyable show. Therefore, by effectively leveraging humour, Indonesian celebrity comedians can entertain, communicate messages compellingly, and strengthen their influence and impact on their audiences, particularly on digital platforms.

## **6. Conclusion**

The results of the current study indicate that Indonesian celebrity comedians employ four humour types on social media, including self-branding, engaging in interpersonal discussions, sharing opinions, and sharing their personal lives. Moreover, it is important to highlight that Indonesian celebrity comedians most frequently employ the self-branding of humour on social media. Evidently, most Indonesian celebrity comedians show their self-branding on social

media through humour that involves developing a clear and consistent brand identity, sharing their expertise, engaging with their audiences and fans, and maintaining their professional presence. Moreover, Indonesian celebrity comedians show how they construct dialogues and conversations to engage in more conversations and discussion and how they consider their words carefully in terms of sharing their ideas and opinions through humour on social media.

Since the present study focuses on the nature of humour employed by Indonesian celebrity comedians on social media, it does not consider the potential consequences that could be seen as controversial or offensive from different views or perspectives, particularly from those audiences or viewers in general. Moreover, the present study also includes three types of social media platforms to explore humour among Indonesian celebrity comedians. Other social media platforms are possibly considered for discovering the nature of humour among Indonesian celebrity comedians or popular celebrities from different countries to develop insight into knowledge in social communication and language use, particularly in discourse context on the social media platforms.

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### **Video Links**

- Comedy, 7. Ayu & Dicky Difie, Pasangan Kocak Bikin Ngakak | BTS BEST MOMENT (11/09/22). Retrieved December 15, 2022, from <https://youtu.be/Atux6SC1yvQ?si=SGvIbh3snO434sLQ>
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- Trans7, O. Semakin Natural, Ayu Makin Kesini Makin Kesana | BTS (26/11/22) Part 2. Retrieved December 28, 2022, from <https://youtu.be/qGw57Gtyp3U?si=UqiRKTncBirNRwxo>