



EDUTAINMENT STRATEGY OF @ROLANSIHOMBING TIKTOK ACCOUNT: BUILDING AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT THROUGH EDUCATIONAL AND ENTERTAINING CONTENT

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Article Info

Article history:

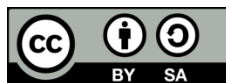
Received : 10 February 2025

Acceptance : 20 February 2025

Published : 05 March 2025

How to cite:

Pulungan, A. T., Hamdan, Mubarak. A. (2025). EDUTAINMENT STRATEGY OF @ROLANSIHOMBING TIKTOK ACCOUNT: BUILDING AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT THROUGH EDUCATIONAL AND ENTERTAINING CONTENT. OPINI: Journal of Communication and Social Science, 2(1), 13-26.



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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the edutainment strategy used by the TikTok account @rolansihombing_ to build audience engagement through educational running-themed content. The study employed a qualitative approach with content analysis, supported by data collection techniques such as non-participant observation and literature review. The results indicate that the most consistently used primary strategy is personal storytelling combined with humor, demonstrative visualizations, and a delivery style tailored to the characteristics of the TikTok platform. This combination makes technical information such as the concept of "pace" and basic running exercises easier to understand, especially for novice runners, while also increasing engagement in the form of likes, comments, saves, and shares. The findings also align with the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), which emphasizes the influence of emotional engagement in message processing. The study's limitations lie in its focus on a single account and its failure to examine long-term impacts. Further research is recommended to examine longitudinal, cross-platform effects, and audience demographic influences.

Keywords: Audience engagement, Edutainment strategy, Elaboration Likelihood Model, Running education content, TikTok learning

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, social media trends have experienced a significant shift with the emergence of edutainment, a combination of education and entertainment as an effective strategy to capture audience attention (Baker et al., 2025; Ghani et al., 2023). Platforms like TikTok and Instagram have become the main stage for creators who

can present beneficial information in creative, entertaining, and easily understood ways (Bermúdez, 2023; Suhendar et al., 2023). Edutainment, a portmanteau of education and entertainment, is a concept that combines education with entertainment. This approach presents learning materials in an enjoyable manner, allowing audiences to learn without feeling burdened by overly formal information. According to Dahlan (2025), edutainment combines elements of modern entertainment with traditional teaching methods, making the learning process more engaging.

Edutainment combines the delivery of educational information with entertainment elements such as humor, attractive visuals, music, and powerful storytelling (Ewelt-Knauer et al., 2025; Savolainen, 2022). This approach enables audiences to gain knowledge while enjoying a pleasant experience. Such entertaining content tends to go viral more easily, as it aligns with fast and interactive media consumption patterns, thus garnering widespread likes, shares, and comments. In line with this, research conducted by Othman et al., (2022) shows that edutainment media greatly facilitates students learning from home. The study found that even though learning was conducted online, the learning outcomes of students using edutainment media were higher compared to conventional learning using books. These findings affirm the effectiveness of edutainment as a relevant educational tool in the digital era, reinforcing the claim that this method is not only appealing but also significantly improves learning outcomes (Harianto et al., 2023; Ritonga et al., 2023).

Through edutainment, creators can significantly increase audience engagement. Audiences feel emotionally and intellectually connected to the content, which not only extends viewing duration but also encourages interaction and loyalty (Hao et al., 2025). Especially on TikTok, the short yet entertaining video format makes edutainment a relevant and strategic approach in today's digital world (Kholil et al., 2024; Luik et al., 2025). TikTok, launched in 2016 by ByteDance, is a Chinese social media platform that allows users to create and share short videos (Fan & Hemans, 2022). According to data from CNN Indonesia, TikTok users in Indonesia reached 157.6 million in August 2024, making Indonesia the country with the highest number of TikTok users in the world (Prevost et al., 2023). This figure surpasses the United

States in second place with about 120.5 million users, and Brazil in third place with nearly 105.3 million TikTok users (cn, 2023). By Lee & Abidin (2023), TikTok had become part of popular culture in Indonesia. Modern audiences, especially the younger generation, are not only seeking entertainment but also content that provides educational value. They want to increase their knowledge, skills, or understanding of various topics such as health, finance, and science, but with presentations that are engaging and entertaining. TikTok allows creators to present information interactively and creatively, including through various topics such as general knowledge, practical tips, and science and technology (IPTEK) (Azni, 2024).

One form of educational campaign on TikTok is the use of hashtags to promote educational campaigns. In October 2020, TikTok invited creators to participate in the #TikTokPintar competition, which offered prizes worth hundreds of millions of rupiah. Creators were free to create educational content on various themes such as business, general knowledge, and foreign languages, which helped enrich educational content on the platform while encouraging creators to present beneficial and entertaining content.

Starting with the Sama Sama Belajar campaign studied by Zhang (2021), TikTok has transformed from an entertainment platform into an educational platform. The increasingly widespread use of TikTok influences various aspects of life, including education. According to Sazali & Sukriah (2021), social media as an educational tool has four main functions: 1) providing information, 2) providing education, 3) providing entertainment, and 4) influencing the audience. These functions have given birth to the concept of edutainment as a combination of information and education (Dalimunthe et al., 2024; Ohorella et al., 2024).

The Deloitte Global Millennial Survey 2020 report shows that nearly three-quarters of the 27,528 millennial and Gen Z respondents across 43 countries feel that the pandemic has made them more concerned about others' needs. They are also committed to taking actions that have a positive impact on their communities. One proof of this trend is the use of the hashtag #SamaSamaBelajar, which garnered around 20 million views. This survey also indicates that although millennials and Gen Z face personal challenges, they remain focused on larger social issues.

As interest in edutainment content grows, creators and brands are increasingly

aware of the importance of combining educational elements with entertainment to maintain audience engagement. By blending these two elements, they create memorable experiences that benefit viewers. One creator who has consistently succeeded in creating informative and entertaining content is @rolansihombing, who focuses on running themes. The popularity of running, especially among young people, continues to increase. According to data from Garmin, the number of runners in Indonesia tripled in 2024. This phenomenon not only reflects the growing public awareness of the importance of health and fitness but also shows that running has become part of the urban lifestyle.

Awareness of the importance of exercise continues to grow in society. Exercise is no longer viewed as a special activity for professional athletes but is now considered part of a healthy lifestyle recognized as a long-term investment. According to L. Zhang et al (2025), regular physical activity plays an important role in shaping healthy living habits. Running competitions have also become recreational events and a means of self-actualization. Ranisha et al (2024) state that a healthy lifestyle is a form of self-actualization, responsibility for health, and interpersonal support in stress management. The global running trend, including in Indonesia, is also reflected in data from the Garmin Connect application. In May 2024, more than 80 thousand active users in Indonesia were recorded running, double the number of runners in May of the previous year, which only reached 35 thousand (Helton Jr et al., 2025).

Rolan Sihombing utilizes the TikTok platform to share information about running techniques, health tips, and sports motivation in an engaging and easily understood manner. Through his creative and interactive approach, he successfully combines education and entertainment in every uploaded video, ensuring that the audience doesn't feel burdened by overly formal information. As a result, he has succeeded in attracting the attention of young people who are looking for enjoyable ways to stay active and healthy. The TikTok account @rolansihombing is highly relevant to the growing edutainment trend. Modern audiences are now not only seeking entertainment but also content that is beneficial for their daily lives. The content presented by Rolan is not only entertaining but also supports a healthy lifestyle among the younger generation. This makes him a good example of using social media for effective and relevant educational purposes.

Previous research has found that edutainment content on TikTok social media, such as on the @pilihjurusan.id account (Anita, 2023), can significantly increase audience engagement (Rachmawati & Anita, 2023). Content that combines education and entertainment, like "Guess the College Major," successfully attracts attention through the theory of innovation diffusion, similar to @rolansihombing's strategy in running content. Another study on edutainment music videos for COVID-19 prevention highlights the importance of creative and effective content format and substance, relevant to Rolan's approach in delivering running education in an engaging way (Othman et al., 2022). Meanwhile, funfact content on TikTok @buiramira emphasizes the importance of casual and entertaining delivery to create a relaxed learning atmosphere, which is also applied by Rolan Sihombing (Aziz et al., 2023). All these studies highlight the great potential of social media in presenting educational content effectively, which is relevant to the research focus on edutainment strategies in the @rolansihombing account. This indicates that social media platforms like TikTok can be utilized to present educational content effectively and expand the scope of learning (Mistari & Rahim, 2023). This aligns with your research analyzing how Rolan Sihombing uses TikTok to spread educational content about running, which is essentially a form of digital learning.

Previous research has not specifically examined edutainment strategies for building audience engagement in sports topics, especially running. The main focus of previous studies has been more on general education or health, such as careers, COVID-19, or academic content. There is no research discussing how edutainment on social media can become a reference for beginners in learning physical activities like running. Your research fills this gap by examining how Rolan Sihombing builds engagement with beginner audiences in running through educational and entertaining content.

This research is important because it fills a gap in the literature regarding the use of edutainment strategies in running sports on social media, in line with the running trend among young people and social media as a learning platform. This research also helps understand how content that combines education and entertainment can support beginners in starting and maintaining healthy habits. Additionally, the results can serve as a guide for other content creators who want to promote a healthy lifestyle through a fun and interactive approach. This article aims to analyze how the TikTok

account @rolansihombing uses edutainment strategies to deliver useful information for runners, especially beginner runners, and to explore the impact of this content on increasing interest and engagement of young people in running sports.

2. RESEARCH METHODE

The type of research used in this study is qualitative with a content analysis approach. Kuckartz & Radiker (2023) in his book titled "Content Analysis: An Introduction to This Methodology" states that content analysis research is a research method conducted to obtain valid and replicable conclusions according to its context of use. The data collection techniques used in this research are non-participant observation and literature study. Non-participant observation is where the researcher acts as an observer of the object to be studied without being directly involved, as the researcher's position is that of an independent observer. Meanwhile, the literature study used in this research includes journals, books, and research relevant to the object being studied.

In this research, the data analysis technique used refers to the Miles and Huberman model as explained. The data analysis process begins with data reduction, which involves summarizing and simplifying the data obtained from the field, so that the focus is only on information relevant to the research objectives (Khoei & Singh, 2025). The next step is data presentation in a structured form, such as tables, graphs, or narratives, which makes it easier for researchers to understand patterns and relationships between data. The final stage is drawing conclusions and verification, where the researcher formulates conclusions based on the processed data. These conclusions are tentative and will be strengthened or refined through an ongoing verification process throughout the research, until the final conclusions can be established with greater validity.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In the ever-evolving landscape of social media, Rolan Sihombing, through his TikTok account @rolansihombing_, has successfully created a unique space that effectively combines education and entertainment. The edutainment strategy he

applies in his running-related content demonstrates a deep understanding of modern audience preferences, especially young people seeking beneficial information in an entertaining format. Rolan's approach not only captures viewers' attention but also maintains their engagement through informative and entertaining content. His success in balancing educational and entertainment aspects reflects his ability to understand and respond to the needs of digital audiences who desire content that is not only educational but also entertaining. The edutainment strategies employed by Rolan Sihombing on his TikTok account include:

Engaging Storytelling

One of the main elements found in Rolan Sihombing's TikTok content is the use of powerful storytelling (Putri, 2022). In various videos, Rolan utilizes personal narratives that successfully create emotional connections with the audience. For example, in the video "Curhatan Casis Gagal" (Failed Cadet Confessions) on January 30, 2024, Rolan recounts his experience of failing the selection to become a cadet (candidate student) for the military, delivered with exaggerated crying acting. This approach successfully combines humor with relatable personal stories, making his content not only entertaining but also motivational. This technique creates authentic storytelling and adds genuineness to the presented content. This technique, known as "self-deprecating humor," creates an appealing comedic effect (Maíz-Arévalo, 2024). This approach successfully creates a balance between empathy and entertainment. Viewers feel connected to Rolan's experience, yet are also entertained by how he presents his failure. Rolan combines universal themes such as failure and resilience, making his content accessible to a wide audience, not limited to the running community. The use of terms familiar to the audience such as "cagur" (failed cadet) adds a personal and contextual touch that increases relevance and connection with viewers.

Integration of Education and Entertainment

This application is seen in the video titled "Apa itu pace?" (What is pace?) (July 15, 2024). Rolan successfully combines educational elements with entertainment

through a clever strategy. In "Apa itu pace?", Rolan starts with a question as a hook, which grabs the audience's attention and motivates them to keep listening. Additionally, he explains the concept of pace using everyday language and simple analogies, making a complex topic easier to understand for the audience, especially beginners (Kazanskaia, 2025). The humor inserted at the end of the video, such as the joke about "Papua people's pace," serves to lighten the mood and maintain audience attention, making the information easier to digest without feeling burdensome. These findings are supported by very high audience engagement data, with 113.7 thousand likes, 735 comments, 17.4 thousand saves, and 1,174 shares (Kim, 2024). These numbers indicate that Rolan's strategy is capable of triggering active interaction, discussion, and information dissemination among the audience.

Use of Visual and Verbal Elements

The edutainment strategy in Rolan's content is also evident through the effective use of visual elements. In tutorial videos like "ABC Drill," on October 31, 2023, Rolan uses visual demonstrations to show movement techniques directly. This approach not only makes it easier for viewers to understand the movements but also leverages the power of visual platforms like TikTok to deliver messages



Figure 1. Video 1, 2 and 3, Source: TikTok @Rolansihombing

more effectively compared to verbal explanations alone (Kulaga, 2024). Attractive visualizations are combined with brief and informative explanations in the form of verbal narratives. This creates a balance between showing and explaining,

making the content more dynamic and easier for the audience to absorb information. Rolan also sometimes adds dialogue or question-and-answer elements at the end of the video, which serve to bridge the gap between novice viewers and experts, creating an interactive learning experience.

Based on the analysis of three main videos on the TikTok account @rolansihombing_, it was found that the consistently used edutainment strategy is storytelling, with an emphasis on personal narrative and the insertion of humor as an entertainment element. The use of storytelling has proven successful in combining educational and entertainment elements, making it an effective strategy for increasing audience engagement (Nicoli et al., 2022).

The storytelling and humor strategies applied by Rolan Sihombing in his running content are highly effective in creating emotional connections with the audience. Psychologically, storytelling has the power to connect audiences with content more deeply. According to the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) theory, when audiences feel emotionally connected to a message, they tend to process that information more deeply, which in turn increases their recall of the information presented (Craik, 2022). In this case, the personal narratives shared by Rolan about his running experiences and challenges become highly relevant to the audience, as they can see reflections of themselves in these stories. When audiences feel that the information provided directly relates to their life experiences, the motivation to process the message in a deeper way increases (Moyer-Gusé & Wilson, 2024). This makes the storytelling and humor strategy not only attract audience attention but also effective in enhancing understanding and information retention, thus encouraging audiences to be more engaged and responsive to the presented content (Kasilingam & Ajitha, 2022).

Humor serves as an important tool to maintain audience attention on platforms like TikTok, which demand short and engaging content. According to research conducted by Ali & Bardaie (2023), humor can help learners improve memory, reduce stress, and facilitate understanding in certain fields. The use of humor in an educational context can increase information retention and create a more relaxed learning atmosphere, making audiences feel comfortable absorbing technical information.

These findings align with the concept of edutainment which emphasizes the combination of educational and entertainment elements in content. Storytelling as part of edutainment has proven effective across various digital platforms in delivering messages informatively and engagingly. This is consistent with studies stating that storytelling on social media can increase user interaction with content (Nicoli et al., 2022). Rolan successfully uses this concept to explain running techniques such as pace and ABC Drill in a friendly and easy-to-follow manner, without making the audience feel overwhelmed by complex technical information.

Overall, the edutainment strategy used by Rolan Sihombing, especially through storytelling packaged with personal narrative, humor, and clear visualization, proves effective in increasing audience engagement on TikTok. These findings indicate that the edutainment approach on social media can be used as a powerful tool to convey technical information in a more accessible and acceptable way to a broad audience.

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that the edutainment strategy used by @rolansihombing_ on TikTok effectively increases audience engagement with educational content related to running. The main findings indicate that personal storytelling, the integration of humor, clear visualization, and platform-tailored content significantly enhance the delivery of technical information, particularly for beginner runners. These results align with the Elaboration Likelihood Model and reinforce the effectiveness of edutainment in informal learning in the digital era. This study provides valuable guidance for content creators and educators in designing engaging social media educational content.

The limitations include a focus on a single TikTok account and the absence of an assessment of long-term impact. Future research should explore longitudinal effects, cross-platform comparisons, demographic influences, and applications in other educational fields. In conclusion, this study confirms the potential of edutainment strategies to enhance engagement with educational content on social media, paving the way for innovative approaches in digital education. Furthermore, this study highlights the evolving nature of learning in the digital era and the important role of social media

influencers in education and health promotion. It contributes to the literature on digital learning and social media education by offering empirical evidence of the effectiveness of storytelling and humor in educational content. This study challenges traditional educational paradigms and encourages a more dynamic and accessible learning approach in the 21st century.

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