



# Segmentation of the Public's Information Needs in PT INKA (Persero)'s Digital Communication: A Study of Narratives on Locally Manufactured Trains

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## Abstract

This study analyzes how the information needs of technical and non-technical publics differ in PT INKA (Persero)'s Instagram communication of the “Kereta Buatan Anak Bangsa” narrative about the iE305/CLI-225 commuter train. A descriptive qualitative design applied secondary thematic analysis to in-depth interviews with six purposively selected informants, three technical and three non-technical, coded for sources of knowledge, evaluative orientation, priority information, expected evidence, and conditions of trust. Technical publics prioritize production structure, local and imported components, domestic content, testing, and reliability. Non-technical publics prioritize comfort, facilities, service consistency, maintenance, and responses to feedback. The boundary is fluid, and both groups demand contextual transparency. The proposed layered information architecture, consisting of shared, technical-industrial, and operational-user layers, helps state-owned enterprises design social media content and evaluate it beyond likes and reach. The study moves audience segmentation from interpretation to information needs, showing that publics differ in the sources of legitimacy they use to judge institutional claims, not only in demographics.

**Keywords:** Information Needs, Digital Communication, Audience Segmentation, Instagram, State-Owned Enterprise, Transparency

## 1. Introduction

Social media has transformed organizational communication from one-way information dissemination into an environment that directly connects institutions with diverse publics. Official accounts no longer function merely as publication channels; they are spaces in which organizations construct identities, explain policies and products, and maintain relationships with publics.

Strategic communication scholarship defines this work as the purposeful use of communication by an organization to fulfil its mission, which increasingly takes place through interactions that the organization does not fully control.<sup>1</sup> On social media, such efforts require planning that goes beyond choosing content formats and posting frequency. Communication strategies must consider who receives the message, what information is relevant to them, and how that information can be understood and trusted by different audiences.<sup>2</sup>

Instagram has become an important channel for institutional communication because it combines images, video, text, and interactive features within a single environment. Organizational use of Instagram contributes to institutional identity and supports the development of communities around an organization.<sup>3</sup> In the context of state-owned enterprises (SOEs), Instagram management functions as part of public relations strategies to disseminate corporate information, strengthen organizational image, and maintain relationships with publics.<sup>4</sup> Recent studies on digital public relations practice show that effective institutional communication on Instagram is associated with transparency, narrative consistency, two-way communication, and public participation,<sup>5</sup> while SOE-related content can operate not only informatively but also as a symbolic relational medium between organizations and their publics.<sup>6</sup>

However, a single official account does not imply that all followers require the same depth of information. Social media publics are heterogeneous in education, occupation, experience, community involvement, and product use. Publics on social media can be segmented through their information behavior and their positions within communication networks, which means that they should not be treated as static categories.<sup>7</sup> Brief and emotional messages may be enough to attract some audiences, whereas others require technical explanations or operational evidence before they develop trust. The challenge of digital communication is therefore not only how to create engaging messages, but also how to align the depth of information with the orientations and expectations of different publics.

This problem is visible in the digital communication of PT Industri Kereta Api (Persero), or INKA, concerning the iE305/CLI-225 electric multiple unit train used in the Jabodetabek commuter line (KRL). INKA's Instagram account presented the train under the narrative "Kereta Buatan

<sup>1</sup> Kirk Hallahan et al., "Defining Strategic Communication," *International Journal of Strategic Communication* 1, no. 1 (2007): 3–35, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15531180701285244>; Ansgar Zerfass et al., "Strategic Communication: Defining the Field and Its Contribution to Research and Practice," *International Journal of Strategic Communication* 12, no. 4 (2018): 487–505, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118X.2018.1493485>.

<sup>2</sup> Kenneth D. Plowman and Christopher Wilson, "Strategy and Tactics in Strategic Communication: Examining Their Intersection with Social Media Use," *International Journal of Strategic Communication* 12, no. 2 (2018): 125–44, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118X.2018.1428979>.

<sup>3</sup> Tania Blanco-Sánchez and Belén Moreno-Albarracín, "Instagram as a Communication Channel in the Academic Field: Comparison of the Strategies of the Best Universities in the World," *Revista de Comunicación* 22, no. 1 (2023): 35–51, <https://doi.org/10.26441/RC22.1-2023-3001>.

<sup>4</sup> Anisa Diniati, Klara Tania Setyawan, and Martha Tri Lestari, "Instagram Social Media as Peruri's Public Relations Strategy in Communicating with the Public," *Jurnal Komunikasi Ikatan Sarjana Komunikasi Indonesia* 8, no. 1 (2023): 250–64, <https://doi.org/10.25008/jkiski.v8i1.743>.

<sup>5</sup> Hanis Syafikoh Hasibuan, Novie Susanti Suseno, and Heri Hendrawan, "Implementasi digital PR dalam mengkomunikasikan kontinuitas inovasi program CSR melalui Instagram @gcp.idn," *Lektur: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi* 9, no. 2 (2026): 66–76, <https://doi.org/10.21831/lektur.v9i2.27847>.

<sup>6</sup> Muhammad Arief Dwyangghara et al., "Simbolisme digital dalam strategi humas Instagram PELNI Crewing," *Lektur: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi* 8, no. 3 (2025): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.21831/lektur.v8i3.24423>.

<sup>7</sup> Xinyan Zhao, Mengqi Zhan, and Chau-Wai Wong, "Segmenting and Understanding Publics in a Social Media Information Sharing Network: An Interactional and Dynamic Approach," *International Journal of Strategic Communication* 12, no. 1 (2018): 25–45, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118X.2017.1379013>.

Anak Bangsa” (a train made by the nation’s own people), framing it as a representation of national industrial capability and Indonesia’s technological development. National-pride framing is common in Indonesian brand communication, where local brands turn audiences’ collective memory of the nation into a reason to choose their products.<sup>8</sup> For an industrial product, however, such framing is open to scrutiny, because some publics can check the claim against what they know about how the product is actually built and how it performs. This narrative reached publics with different relationships to railway issues. Some had technical educational backgrounds, worked in engineering-related fields, or were active in railway enthusiast communities and media. Others engaged with the train primarily as regular or daily passengers. These differences produced distinct evaluation frameworks: technical publics assessed the message through knowledge of systems, components, assembly, and supply chains, whereas non-technical publics relied on travel experience, comfort, facilities, and service quality.

This article shifts the analytical focus away from the reception analysis conducted in the first author’s thesis research, which examined whether publics accepted, negotiated, or rejected the narrative. It focuses instead on the communication consequences of different sources of knowledge and experience, namely the types of information that different publics require. This shift matters because effective digital communication requires more than knowing whether publics support or criticize a message; organizations must also know what information would turn support, criticism, or uncertainty into more productive relationships. Information usefulness is an essential principle of dialogic organizational communication on social media,<sup>9</sup> and a systematic review of social media public relations research has shown that the field still devotes more attention to platforms, content, and practitioners than to publics themselves.<sup>10</sup>

The problem becomes more complex for technology-based products, because publics evaluate organizational messages through two forms of evidence: organizational representations (visuals, slogans, infographics, and production narratives) and their own direct experience as users. Information credibility on social media depends on sources and contexts of trust,<sup>11</sup> and social media use does not automatically improve organizational reputation without strategic management and stakeholder engagement.<sup>12</sup> Institutions that communicate complex technological products therefore need information strategies that bridge symbolic claims with evidence relevant to different publics.

Accordingly, this study analyzes how the information needs of technical and non-technical publics differ in INKA’s digital communication on Instagram. The research question is: how do differences in knowledge background and experience shape the information needs of technical and non-technical publics when they engage with INKA’s digital communication? The study contributes in two ways. Academically, it extends discussions of audience segmentation by showing that segmentation in

<sup>8</sup> Dwimay Fawzy and Lailiya Nur Rokhman, “Mencintai produk lokal dengan semangat nasionalisme banal: Komodifikasi memori kebangsaan pada iklan merek lokal,” *Jurnal Komunikasi* 18, no. 2 (2024): 249–64, <https://doi.org/10.20885/komunikasi.vol18.iss2.art8>.

<sup>9</sup> Yuan Wang and Yiyi Yang, “Dialogic Communication on Social Media: How Organizations Use Twitter to Build Dialogic Relationships with Their Publics,” *Computers in Human Behavior* 104 (2020): 106183, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2019.106183>.

<sup>10</sup> Yuan Wang, Yang Cheng, and Jie Sun, “When Public Relations Meets Social Media: A Systematic Review of Social Media Related Public Relations Research from 2006 to 2020,” *Public Relations Review* 47, no. 4 (2021): 102081, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2021.102081>.

<sup>11</sup> Delonia Cooley and Rochelle Parks-Yancy, “The Effect of Social Media on Perceived Information Credibility and Decision Making,” *Journal of Internet Commerce* 18, no. 3 (2019): 249–69, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15332861.2019.1595362>.

<sup>12</sup> María-Victoria Carrillo-Durán and María García García, “Exploring the Need for Stakeholders’ Engagement through Social Networking Sites to Build the Reputation of Higher Education Organisations,” *Higher Education Quarterly* 74, no. 4 (2020): 442–57, <https://doi.org/10.1111/hequ.12256>.

institutional communication concerns not only demographic characteristics but also the sources of legitimacy that publics use when evaluating organizational messages. Practically, it proposes a layered information architecture that allows an organization to deliver a shared message accessible to general audiences while providing deeper technical and operational information for publics who need it.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Strategic Communication and State-Owned Enterprises

Strategic communication views communication as a deliberately designed and integrated activity that supports organizational goals and builds relationships with stakeholders.<sup>13</sup> Rather than treating communication as the transmission of messages from sender to receiver, it positions organizations and publics in a mutually influential relationship, so that effectiveness depends on how messages are understood, interpreted, and turned into meaningful relationships.<sup>14</sup> This perspective is particularly relevant to SOEs, which are expected not only to perform economically but also to contribute to national development agendas. Corporate communication in such organizations serves as an instrument for building reputation, trust, and stakeholder understanding of the organization's contribution,<sup>15</sup> and organizational legitimacy rests on whether publics perceive the organization's actions as desirable and appropriate within a socially constructed system of norms and values.<sup>16</sup> For INKA, the "Kereta Buatan Anak Bangsa" narrative is therefore not only promotional; it is a legitimacy claim about Indonesia's railway industry that publics are able to test.

Messages about public value, innovation, and national capability are common in SOE communication, yet they carry a particular risk. When an organization communicates strategic issues such as domestic industrial development only from its own perspective, gaps in understanding emerge between what the organization claims and what different publics know or experience. A strategic approach therefore requires the organization to anticipate how publics with different knowledge will read its claims and what evidence each of them will consider sufficient. INKA, as the national railway manufacturer, illustrates this situation clearly because its products are simultaneously symbols of national achievement, complex engineering systems, and everyday public services.

### 2.2. Social Media, Dialogue, and Organization–Public Relationships

Social media is built on user-generated content and interaction, which allows organizations to communicate directly with publics and receive immediate feedback.<sup>17</sup> Its functional building blocks, such as identity, conversations, sharing, relationships, and reputation, mean that organizations no longer fully control how their messages circulate.<sup>18</sup> Recent research shows that social media has

<sup>13</sup> Hallahan et al., "Defining Strategic Communication."

<sup>14</sup> Zerfass et al., "Strategic Communication."

<sup>15</sup> Joep Cornelissen, *Corporate Communication: A Guide to Theory and Practice*, 7th ed. (London: SAGE Publications, 2023).

<sup>16</sup> Mark C. Suchman, "Managing Legitimacy: Strategic and Institutional Approaches," *Academy of Management Review* 20, no. 3 (1995): 571–610, <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1995.9508080331>.

<sup>17</sup> Andreas M. Kaplan and Michael Haenlein, "Users of the World, Unite! The Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media," *Business Horizons* 53, no. 1 (2010): 59–68, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2009.09.003>.

<sup>18</sup> Jan H. Kietzmann et al., "Social Media? Get Serious! Understanding the Functional Building Blocks of Social Media," *Business Horizons* 54, no. 3 (2011): 241–51, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2011.01.005>.

become a central arena in which publics compare, evaluate, and co-create organizational messages,<sup>19</sup> and governmental and public-sector accounts use it for symbolic acts and self-presentation as well as information provision.<sup>20</sup> Dialogic theory argues that organizations should build two-way relationships characterized by mutuality, propinquity, empathy, risk, and commitment.<sup>21</sup> Later work clarifies that dialogic engagement is an orientation and a process of interaction grounded in dialogue, not merely a count of reactions or responses to comments,<sup>22</sup> and that social media architectures can be designed to foster such engagement.<sup>23</sup> Empirical studies confirm that the usefulness of information is among the dialogic principles organizations emphasize most on social media.<sup>24</sup>

### 2.3. Information Needs, Credibility, and Transparency

Information needs are the gaps between what people know and what they want or need to know in order to make sense of a situation; they shape how people seek, select, and use information.<sup>25</sup> In organizational communication, such needs extend beyond the quantity of information to its relevance, clarity, and capacity to resolve uncertainty. Online, people judge credibility through cognitive heuristics such as reputation, endorsement, consistency, and expectancy violation,<sup>26</sup> and perceived credibility of social media information depends on the source and context of trust.<sup>27</sup> Transparency is closely tied to credibility. Organizational transparency involves providing substantial, useful information, encouraging stakeholder participation, and accepting accountability,<sup>28</sup> yet it is not simply the disclosure of information, because it is shaped by the conditions under which organizations make themselves visible.<sup>29</sup> In online public relations, transparency exists in tension between openness, organizational control, dialogue, and authenticity.<sup>30</sup> For an audience-centered approach, these insights imply that communication should be examined not only from the perspective of the organization as sender but also from how publics receive, judge, and use the information provided.

<sup>19</sup> Gil Appel et al., "The Future of Social Media in Marketing," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 48, no. 1 (2020): 79–95, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-019-00695-1>; Yogesh K. Dwivedi et al., "Setting the Future of Digital and Social Media Marketing Research: Perspectives and Research Propositions," *International Journal of Information Management* 59 (2021): 102168, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2020.102168>.

<sup>20</sup> Nic DePaula, Ersin Dincelli, and Teresa M. Harrison, "Toward a Typology of Government Social Media Communication: Democratic Goals, Symbolic Acts and Self-Presentation," *Government Information Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (2018): 98–108, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2017.10.003>.

<sup>21</sup> Michael L. Kent and Maureen Taylor, "Toward a Dialogic Theory of Public Relations," *Public Relations Review* 28, no. 1 (2002): 21–37, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0363-8111\(02\)00108-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0363-8111(02)00108-X).

<sup>22</sup> Maureen Taylor and Michael L. Kent, "Dialogic Engagement: Clarifying Foundational Concepts," *Journal of Public Relations Research* 26, no. 5 (2014): 384–98, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1062726X.2014.956106>; Ganga S. Dhanesh, "Putting Engagement in Its Proper Place: State of the Field, Definition and Model of Engagement in Public Relations," *Public Relations Review* 43, no. 5 (2017): 925–33, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2017.04.001>.

<sup>23</sup> Michael L. Kent and Maureen Taylor, "Fostering Dialogic Engagement: Toward an Architecture of Social Media for Social Change," *Social Media + Society* 7, no. 1 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120984462>.

<sup>24</sup> Wang and Yang, "Dialogic Communication on Social Media."

<sup>25</sup> Lisa M. Given, Donald O. Case, and Rebekah Willson, *Looking for Information: Examining Research on How People Engage with Information*, 5th ed. (Bingley, UK: Emerald Publishing, 2023).

<sup>26</sup> Miriam J. Metzger and Andrew J. Flanagin, "Credibility and Trust of Information in Online Environments: The Use of Cognitive Heuristics," *Journal of Pragmatics* 59 (2013): 210–20, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2013.07.012>.

<sup>27</sup> Cooley and Parks-Yancy, "Effect of Social Media."

<sup>28</sup> Brad L. Rawlins, "Give the Emperor a Mirror: Toward Developing a Stakeholder Measurement of Organizational Transparency," *Journal of Public Relations Research* 21, no. 1 (2009): 71–99, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10627260802153421>.

<sup>29</sup> Oana Brindusa Albu and Mikkel Flyverbom, "Organizational Transparency: Conceptualizations, Conditions, and Consequences," *Business & Society* 58, no. 2 (2019): 268–97, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0007650316659851>.

<sup>30</sup> Philip Wamprechtsamer, "Transparency Ideals in Online PR: Between Dialogue, Control and Authenticity," *Journal of Communication Management* 28, no. 2 (2024): 211–25, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JCOM-02-2023-0028>.

Because publics can now compare organizational messages with other sources and with their own experience, information that is persuasive but not useful is likely to weaken rather than strengthen trust.

#### 2.4. Segmenting Publics by Knowledge and Experience

Public relations research has long argued that publics should be segmented according to their relationship with an issue rather than demographics alone.<sup>31</sup> The situational theory of problem solving explains that problem recognition, constraint recognition, involvement, and referent criteria shape how actively people seek, select, and share information.<sup>32</sup> In social media networks, segments are interactional and dynamic: a person's position can shift with the topic under discussion.<sup>33</sup> Studies of Instagram audiences in Indonesia show that the same content is interpreted differently according to cultural perspectives and personal experience,<sup>34</sup> including when institutions use Instagram for branding.<sup>35</sup> Studies of SOE accounts likewise show that Instagram serves public relations, public education, and symbolic relationship building,<sup>36</sup> and that transparency and two-way communication characterize effective digital public relations.<sup>37</sup> Applied to institutional communication, segmentation by knowledge and experience is important because publics do not have the same capacity or motivation to evaluate organizational messages. Publics with technical backgrounds tend to judge communication by substantive evidence such as production processes, specifications, and the validity of claims, whereas publics with direct user experience tend to focus on service quality, comfort, practical benefits, and organizational responsiveness. Information that is highly valuable to one group may have limited relevance to another, which suggests that effective communication does not require one uniform message but layered information that offers different depths for different publics.

#### 2.5. Research Gap

Taken together, the literature explains how publics construct meaning from institutional content and why dialogue, credibility, and transparency matter. However, existing Indonesian Instagram studies stop at differences in interpretation, while segmentation theory has rarely been applied to the information content that organizations should provide. Little is known about how variations in audience background translate into different information needs in institutional digital communication, particularly when the object of communication is an industrial and public transportation product that combines technical dimensions with everyday user experience. This study addresses that gap.

<sup>31</sup> Jeong-Nam Kim, Lan Ni, and Bey-Ling Sha, "Breaking Down the Stakeholder Environment: Explicating Approaches to the Segmentation of Publics for Public Relations Research," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 85, no. 4 (2008): 751–68, <https://doi.org/10.1177/107769900808500403>.

<sup>32</sup> Jeong-Nam Kim and James E. Grunig, "Problem Solving and Communicative Action: A Situational Theory of Problem Solving," *Journal of Communication* 61, no. 1 (2011): 120–49, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2010.01529.x>.

<sup>33</sup> Zhao, Zhan, and Wong, "Segmenting and Understanding Publics."

<sup>34</sup> Ken Ariestyani and Adisa Ramadhanty, "Khalayak media sosial: Analisis resepsi Stuart Hall pada kesehatan seksual orang muda," *Konvergensi: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Komunikasi* 3, no. 2 (2022): 266–77, <https://doi.org/10.51353/kvg.v3i2.704>.

<sup>35</sup> Ribka Gabriella Ambarita and Melati Mediana Tobing, "Analisis resepsi khalayak mengenai branding Hotel Borobudur Jakarta sebagai family hotel melalui konten Instagram," *Jurnal Komunikasi* 15, no. 2 (2024): 56–63, <https://doi.org/10.31294/jkom.v15i2.23031>.

<sup>36</sup> Diniati, Setyawan, and Lestari, "Instagram Social Media"; Dwyangghara et al., "Simbolisme digital."

<sup>37</sup> Hasibuan, Suseno, and Hendrawan, "Implementasi digital PR."

### 3. Method

The research setting is the digital communication of PT INKA (Persero), a state-owned railway manufacturer based in Madiun, East Java, about the iE305/CLI-225 electric multiple unit train, which INKA produced for the Jabodetabek commuter rail service. The unit of analysis is not INKA's content itself but the information needs expressed by publics who encountered that content. This study used a descriptive qualitative design based on a secondary thematic analysis of in-depth interview data from the first author's thesis research. A qualitative approach was chosen to explore meanings and patterns emerging from informants' experiences in their social contexts.<sup>38</sup> Secondary analysis of qualitative data is legitimate when previously collected data are re-examined with a new research question, provided that the fit between the data and the new question is assessed and the analytic procedure is reported transparently.<sup>39</sup> The original thesis examined public reception of the "Kereta Buatan Anak Bangsa" narrative; this article asks a different question, namely how information needs differ between publics. Reflexive thematic analysis was applied to identify recurring patterns of meaning while attending to variation across cases.<sup>40</sup>

The corpus consists of semi-structured in-depth interviews with six informants selected through purposive sampling. Selection criteria were relevant experience or knowledge of the iE305/CLI-225 electric multiple unit train and exposure to INKA's communication on Instagram. Purposive sampling was used to obtain information-rich cases aligned with the objectives of the analysis.<sup>41</sup> A small sample was considered adequate because the study aim was narrow, the informants were highly specific, and the dialogue was strong, which together give a sample high information power.<sup>42</sup>

Informants were grouped into three technical (T1-T3) and three non-technical (N1-N3) informants. The technical category was based on educational background, professional experience, or involvement related to engineering and the railway industry; the non-technical category was based mainly on experience as KRL passengers with varying intensity of use. This categorization was an analytical basis for comparison, not an assumption that non-technical publics lack industrial knowledge or that technical publics lack user experience. Informant profiles are summarized in Table 1.

<sup>38</sup> John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2018).

<sup>39</sup> Janet Heaton, "Secondary Analysis of Qualitative Data: An Overview," *Historical Social Research* 33, no. 3 (2008): 33–45, <https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.33.2008.3.33-45>; Nicole Ruggiano and Tam E. Perry, "Conducting Secondary Analysis of Qualitative Data: Should We, Can We, and How?" *Qualitative Social Work* 18, no. 1 (2019): 81–97, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325017700701>.

<sup>40</sup> Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, *Thematic Analysis: A Practical Guide* (London: SAGE Publications, 2021); David Byrne, "A Worked Example of Braun and Clarke's Approach to Reflexive Thematic Analysis," *Quality & Quantity* 56, no. 3 (2022): 1391–1412, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-021-01182-y>.

<sup>41</sup> Heather Ames, Claire Glenton, and Simon Lewin, "Purposive Sampling in a Qualitative Evidence Synthesis: A Worked Example from a Synthesis on Parental Perceptions of Vaccination Communication," *BMC Medical Research Methodology* 19, no. 1 (2019): 26, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-019-0665-4>.

<sup>42</sup> Kirsti Malterud, Volkert Dirk Siersma, and Ann Dorrit Guassora, "Sample Size in Qualitative Interview Studies: Guided by Information Power," *Qualitative Health Research* 26, no. 13 (2016): 1753–60, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732315617444>.

**Table 1: Analytical Profiles of the Informants**

| Code | Category      | Main Background                                                                           | Dominant Experience Position                                          |
|------|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| T1   | Technical     | Electrical engineering; manager of a railway enthusiast media outlet                      | Engineering literacy, railway enthusiast content production, KRL user |
| T2   | Technical     | Chemical engineering; marketing at an engineering company                                 | Engineering, railway transportation media, regular user               |
| T3   | Technical     | Diploma and bachelor's degrees in electrical engineering; transportation community member | Technical systems, railway enthusiast community                       |
| N1   | Non-technical | Digital communication and media                                                           | Active KRL user                                                       |
| N2   | Non-technical | Economics                                                                                 | Periodic user who compares old and new trainsets                      |
| N3   | Non-technical | Digital communication and media; private-sector employee                                  | Daily commuter and travel content creator                             |

Source: Author's research data (2026).

The analysis proceeded in five stages. First, the interview transcripts, analytic notes, and sections concerning information, evidence, product experience, transparency, and expectations of INKA's communication were reread. Second, initial codes were generated along five analytic dimensions: sources of knowledge, evaluative orientations, information considered important, expected forms of evidence, and conditions that strengthen or weaken trust. Third, codes were compared in a cross-informant matrix to identify patterns between the two groups. Fourth, cases that crossed category boundaries were examined, such as non-technical informants requesting information on local components or technical informants evaluating comfort as passengers. Fifth, patterns were synthesized into themes of information needs and their implications for digital communication.

Trustworthiness was supported through cross-informant comparison, consistency checks between transcripts, analytic matrices, and the documented findings of the original thesis, and a transparent record of analytic decisions.<sup>43</sup> Quotations were selected to represent both recurring patterns and significant variations; editing was limited to removing filler words and adjusting punctuation without altering meaning. The analysis does not seek statistical generalization; it explains how differences in knowledge and experience are associated with variations in information needs in a specific institutional context.

#### 4. Result and Discussion

The primary distinction between technical and non-technical publics lies in their starting points of evaluation and the types of evidence they prioritize. Technical publics begin by asking how the product is manufactured, which components are developed domestically, which technologies are

<sup>43</sup> Lorelli S. Nowell et al., "Thematic Analysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 16, no. 1 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847>.

still obtained through partnerships, and how reliability can be demonstrated. Non-technical publics begin by asking how the product performs in everyday life, whether journeys are comfortable and consistent, how facilities work, and whether the company responds to user problems. Both groups, however, converge on a shared need for transparency, understood not as full disclosure of internal company information but as sufficient context to connect organizational narratives with production processes and performance.

#### 4.1. Segmentation as an Orientation Rather than a Dichotomy

The technical and non-technical categories should not be read as a closed dichotomy. N1 was categorized as non-technical because of a communication background and a position as a user, but a previous internship at INKA gave this informant more institutional knowledge than ordinary passengers. N3's daily KRL use produced detailed knowledge of facilities, service consistency, and changes in performance. Conversely, T1 and T3, despite engineering backgrounds, continued to evaluate air conditioning, doors, acceleration, and comfort from the position of passengers. Experience, occupation, community involvement, media exposure, and intensity of use interact in shaping information needs. Segmentation is therefore better understood as a difference in dominant orientation rather than a fixed identity, which prevents it from reinforcing the assumption that general publics need only emotional messages while technical publics need only data. Information needs shifted with the topic: when discussion turned to component origins or engineering, technical orientations dominated; when it turned to rush-hour journeys or door malfunctions, user experience became the main reference, even for technical informants. Table 2 summarizes the differences.

**Table 2: Differentiation of Public Information Needs**

| Dimension                    | Technical Publics                                                                                                                      | Non-Technical Publics                                                                               |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Starting point of evaluation | How the product is engineered, assembled, tested, and developed                                                                        | How the product works and is experienced on real journeys                                           |
| Priority information         | Local and imported components, domestic content level (TKDN), engineering, electrical, traction and sensor systems, materials, testing | Comfort, air conditioning, seats, standing space, travel time, facilities, consistency, maintenance |
| Expected evidence            | Component infographics, production documentation, test results, progress in local content                                              | Operational updates, explanations of repairs, functions of features, follow-up to user feedback     |
| Communication risk           | Claims that are too absolute or oversimplify the production structure                                                                  | Glorification that does not match the experience of use                                             |
| Shared need                  | Transparency, evidence of progress, accuracy, traceable communication                                                                  | Transparency, evidence of progress, accuracy, traceable communication                               |

Source: Secondary thematic analysis results (2026).

#### 4.2. Technical Publics: Production Accuracy as the Basis of Credibility

T1, who has an electrical engineering background and manages railway enthusiast media, distinguished between production, assembly, locally produced components, and imported components. Support for national products did not remove the need to understand the boundaries of domestic contribution. T1 considered the narrative relevant but warned that it should not be read as a claim that every component is made in Indonesia, and asked the company to show production processes and explain quality development.

*"The narrative is suitable, but for those who already understand the industry, it cannot be fully considered a product entirely made by the nation because some components are still imported."* (T1, technical public)

T2, with a chemical engineering background, experience in an engineering company, and a role as co-founder of a transportation media platform, emphasized local content levels, engineering processes, assembly, and the involvement of local human resources. Accepting that the railway industry operates through international collaboration, T2 asked not for a claim of absolute independence but for a proportional explanation of which parts are developed domestically, and suggested infographics and production documentation to make this composition accessible.

*"The narrative of 'Kereta Buatan Anak Bangsa' can be accepted, but not all components are locally produced. An approximately 25% domestic content level can already become a basis for recognition."* (T2, technical public)

T3 extended technical information needs to reliability, evaluating electrical systems, sensors, traction, materials, doors, assembly quality, and product lifespan. For T3, national pride was not the end goal; success had to be demonstrated through operational performance supported by continuous research and development. This shifts the communication question from "Is this product made by Indonesians?" to "Can Indonesia show that it produces reliable and continuously improving products?"

*"We cannot simply be satisfied by saying that this train is made by Indonesian people. We need to show that a reliable train can also be produced by Indonesian people."* (T3, technical public)

None of the technical informants asked INKA to abandon the national-pride narrative; they asked for accurate boundaries and supporting evidence. Credibility is thus built through the relationship between organizational claims and supporting information rather than through repeated slogans, which is consistent with the view of strategic communication as meaningful interaction that serves organizational goals.<sup>44</sup> The technical informants' reactions can also be read through the heuristics people use to judge online credibility. When a claim contradicts what a reader already knows, such as an implied claim of fully domestic production for a train that the reader knows contains imported components, expectancy violation leads the reader to discount the source as a whole.<sup>45</sup> An overly absolute narrative therefore risks undermining the very pride it seeks to build among the publics most capable of amplifying it, including railway enthusiast media. A proportional claim, by

<sup>44</sup> Zerfass et al., "Strategic Communication."

<sup>45</sup> Metzger and Flanagin, "Credibility and Trust of Information."

contrast, allows these publics to verify and endorse the narrative. Their suggestions also concern format: infographics, production documentation, testing videos, and explanatory series show that segmentation determines how information is presented as well as what is presented. Instagram's visual affordances can turn complex industrial information into accessible and traceable content, since institutional strategies on the platform are closely tied to content formats and discursive intentions.<sup>46</sup> Research on organization-generated content further shows that narrative visuals and interactive features increase public engagement on Instagram,<sup>47</sup> which suggests that production documentation presented as a visual story could serve both credibility and engagement.

#### 4.3. Non-Technical Publics: User Experience as the Center of Relevance

Among non-technical publics, information needs emerged from use and from the need to translate industrial processes into accessible language. N2, a periodic KRL user, became curious about the processes behind the new train after riding it. N2 did not ask for detailed specifications but for information on research and development, the people involved in design, the reasons for design decisions, and the functions of visible features. Non-technical publics therefore do not need less information; they need information placed in a context connected to everyday experience.

*"In my opinion, it should not only be about the narrative. INKA needs to show the process as well, for example, from the research and development stage. Who designed it, why the design was created that way, and what its functions are."* (N2, non-technical public)

N1 focused on the gap between ideal conditions during testing and actual conditions during peak hours. Direct use made post-operation information as important as launch communication, and N1 asked the company to report evaluations, strengths, weaknesses, and follow-up actions based on user feedback.

*"It should be transparent, not only glorification. There should be updates and feedback from users. Content should be honest by showing both strengths and weaknesses."* (N1, non-technical public)

N3 showed the strongest operational orientation because the KRL is a primary mode of daily commuting. N3 assessed air conditioning, seat width, standing space, handrail height, bicycle areas, emergency facilities, travel consistency, and the impact of disruptions. N3 also requested concrete evidence of progress, including quality improvements over time, domestic component percentages, and the direction toward technological independence, which shows that non-technical publics also seek technical information when it has clear implications for performance and experience.

*"When talking about pride, my version of pride as a user is conditional. Genuine pride appears when the train continues to improve, functions properly, and can be continuously repaired when unwanted issues occur."* (N3, non-technical public)

These findings show that "lay public" should not be equated with passive acceptance. They support earlier Indonesian studies showing that personal experience and context shape interpretation,<sup>48</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Blanco-Sánchez and Moreno-Albarracín, "Instagram as a Communication Channel."

<sup>47</sup> Ganga S. Dhanesh, Gaelle Picherit-Duthler, and Kang Li, "Social Media Engagement with Organization-Generated Content: Role of Visuals in Enhancing Public Engagement with Organizations on Facebook and Instagram," *Public Relations Review* 48, no. 2 (2022): 102174, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2022.102174>.

<sup>48</sup> Ariestyani and Ramadhanty, "Khalayak media sosial."

but extend them by identifying the practical consequence: distinct information needs arising from the same message. Technical data becomes acceptable to these publics when it answers everyday questions; seat design matters when connected to standing capacity at peak hours, and door systems matter when linked to disruption management. Communication about technological products should therefore explain the causal link between technical decisions and user experience, using experience as an entry point into complex information. For these publics, credibility is anchored less in the authority of the organization than in the match between what is communicated and what they encounter on the platform and in the carriage. This is consistent with evidence that the perceived credibility of social media information depends on the source and context of trust,<sup>49</sup> and it explains why N1 and N3 framed honesty about weaknesses as a condition for believing claims about strengths.

#### 4.4. Transparency as a Cross-Segment Information Need

Transparency emerged as the need shared by both segments. Technical publics need it to evaluate the accuracy of claims about production, components, and capability; non-technical publics need it to understand how claims translate into quality, maintenance, and improvement. Informants did not ask for disclosure of all internal information but for contextual transparency: sufficient explanation of processes, the limits of claims, progress, and follow-up actions. This corresponds to the view that transparency involves substantial and useful information, participation, and accountability,<sup>50</sup> and to the tension between openness and organizational control in online public relations.<sup>51</sup> A balanced approach is proportional transparency: INKA need not disclose confidential information but can explain component categories, production stages, reasons for external partnerships, forms of technology transfer, improvement indicators, and the progress of problem resolution.

The usefulness of information also varied by orientation. Domestic content data and testing documentation are highly valuable to technical publics, whereas explanations of door repairs, comfort evaluations, or feature functions are more valuable to daily users. Identical information need not be presented in one post at one level of complexity; multiple linked layers allow publics to access what they need, which echoes the dialogic principle of useful information.<sup>52</sup> For an SOE, transparency also has a legitimacy dimension. National-pride narratives carry emotional strength, but symbolic legitimacy becomes more durable when accompanied by material evidence,<sup>53</sup> because users continually compare organizational messages with their own experience, and communication focused only on launch moments loses relevance once products enter routine operation.

#### 4.5. A Layered Information Architecture for INKA's Digital Communication

Based on these patterns, this study proposes a layered information architecture for INKA's digital communication (Table 3). It does not split accounts or publics into separate spaces; instead, it keeps a shared overarching narrative while offering different depths of information. The first, shared layer explains achievements, the actors involved, product functions, and why the product matters. The second, technical-industrial layer details engineering, components, domestic content, testing, technological collaboration, and production capability. The third, operational-user layer explains

<sup>49</sup> Cooley and Parks-Yancy, "Effect of Social Media."

<sup>50</sup> Rawlins, "Give the Emperor a Mirror."

<sup>51</sup> Wamprechtsamer, "Transparency Ideals."

<sup>52</sup> Wang and Yang, "Dialogic Communication on Social Media."

<sup>53</sup> Dwyangghara et al., "Simbolisme digital."

reliability, maintenance, improvements, features, post-operation evaluations, and responses to user experience. The model reflects the findings better than a strict two-group segmentation: T2 needed technical data but also valued accessible public communication, while N3 was experience-oriented but interested in domestic content and technological independence. This supports a view of segmentation as dynamic and shaped by information behavior.<sup>54</sup>

**Table 3: Proposed Layered Information Architecture**

| Layer                | Communication Objective                        | Examples of Information                                                                                      | Primary Publics                            |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Shared               | Build initial understanding and context        | What the product is, who is involved, its function, reasons for development, national achievement            | All publics                                |
| Technical-industrial | Strengthen accuracy and industrial credibility | Engineering, local and imported components, TKDN, testing, technology transfer, production progress          | Technical publics and others seeking depth |
| Operational-user     | Connect claims with real experience            | Reliability, maintenance, features, disruptions and repairs, post-operation evaluation, response to feedback | Regular users and the general public       |

Source: Synthesized from research findings (2026).

In practice, the shared layer can use carousel posts or short videos in accessible language that end by directing publics to more detailed content. The technical layer can offer component infographics, testing explanations, engineering documentation, and domestic content updates, while the user layer can offer “post-operation” content on facility evaluations, responses to disruptions, maintenance, and improvements based on feedback. Emotional communication about national pride thus serves as an entry point, while credibility is built through evidence. Evaluation should accordingly move beyond likes and reach toward indicators aligned with organizational objectives,<sup>55</sup> such as whether publics understand the distinction between domestic production and imported components, whether users know how reported problems were handled, and whether repeated technical questions decline after explanatory content is published. Content that explains processes and progress also creates material for substantive dialogue, turning brief reactions into conversations that reveal public needs.<sup>56</sup>

The layered architecture also clarifies the relationship between information depth and engagement. A common assumption in social media management is that detailed information reduces engagement because it is less entertaining than emotional content. The findings suggest the opposite for publics who are already involved with the product. Content that only celebrates national pride invites short emotional reactions, while content that explains processes, progress, and evaluations gives publics something to ask about, confirm, or dispute. Meaningful dialogue

<sup>54</sup> Zhao, Zhan, and Wong, “Segmenting and Understanding Publics.”

<sup>55</sup> Plowman and Wilson, “Strategy and Tactics.”

<sup>56</sup> Taylor and Kent, “Dialogic Engagement.”

requires communication materials that allow publics to respond substantively, and engagement in public relations is better understood as an affective, cognitive, and behavioral relationship than as a count of reactions.<sup>57</sup> Increasing information depth can therefore transform engagement from brief reactions into conversations that give the organization insight into public needs and expectations.

These implications are consistent with the argument that reputation on social media requires strategic communication and stakeholder engagement rather than mere platform presence.<sup>58</sup> INKA's reputation as a national railway manufacturer depends not only on how often the "Kereta Buatan Anak Bangsa" narrative is repeated but on the organization's ability to manage the relationship between institutional identity, technical evidence, and user experience. The approach also responds to the tendency of social media public relations research to concentrate on content, platforms, and practitioners,<sup>59</sup> by placing public information needs at the basis of institutional content design rather than treating them only as feedback collected after publication.

## 5. Conclusion

This study shows that the information needs of technical and non-technical publics in INKA's digital communication differ mainly in their starting points of evaluation. Technical publics prioritize production structure, domestic and imported components, local content levels, engineering, testing, technological collaboration, and reliability. Non-technical publics prioritize information connected to use: comfort, facilities, travel time, service consistency, maintenance, disruption handling, and responses to feedback. These differences are not absolute, because technical informants also draw on travel experience and non-technical informants seek technical information when it explains product function and credibility. Transparency is the most important shared need.

These findings agree with the view that publics are dynamic and defined by their information behavior rather than fixed demographic traits,<sup>60</sup> and with situational theory, which predicts that involvement and problem recognition drive more active information seeking.<sup>61</sup> They also confirm Indonesian Instagram studies showing that background and experience shape interpretation,<sup>62</sup> while moving beyond them: where those studies end at differences in meaning, this study identifies the concrete information each group needs. The finding that transparency must be contextual rather than total agrees with research on transparency as a balance between openness and control,<sup>63</sup> but partly departs from studies of SOE Instagram accounts that emphasize image building and symbolic relationships.<sup>64</sup> The difference likely arises because those studies analyzed organizational practice, whereas this study begins from publics who evaluate a technological product through daily use, for whom symbolic messages without evidence lose credibility. The findings likewise support dialogic theory's claim that useful information is a precondition for dialogue,<sup>65</sup> but they qualify it: usefulness

<sup>57</sup> Dhanesh, "Putting Engagement in Its Proper Place."

<sup>58</sup> Carrillo-Durán and García García, "Exploring the Need for Stakeholders' Engagement."

<sup>59</sup> Wang, Cheng, and Sun, "When Public Relations Meets Social Media."

<sup>60</sup> Zhao, Zhan, and Wong, "Segmenting and Understanding Publics"; Kim, Ni, and Sha, "Breaking Down the Stakeholder Environment."

<sup>61</sup> Kim and Grunig, "Problem Solving and Communicative Action."

<sup>62</sup> Ariestyani and Ramadhanty, "Khalayak media sosial"; Ambarita and Tobing, "Analisis resepsi khalayak."

<sup>63</sup> Wamprechtsamer, "Transparency Ideals"; Albu and Flyverbom, "Organizational Transparency."

<sup>64</sup> Diniati, Setyawan, and Lestari, "Instagram Social Media"; Dwyangghara et al., "Simbolisme digital."

<sup>65</sup> Wang and Yang, "Dialogic Communication on Social Media."

is not a fixed property of a message, because the same post can be highly useful to one segment and irrelevant to another.

Theoretically, the study suggests that segmentation in institutional communication should be based on the sources of legitimacy publics use when judging a message, such as engineering knowledge or everyday experience, and not only on demographic characteristics. This links segmentation research with credibility and transparency research: each segment has its own criteria of credible evidence, and transparency is effective when it supplies evidence that meets those criteria.

The study proposes a layered information architecture of shared, technical-industrial, and operational-user layers that lets an organization keep a consistent identity while offering different depths of information. Practically, INKA can retain the national-pride narrative as an entry point while strengthening it with production documentation, component and domestic content infographics, testing explanations, quality updates, post-operation evaluations, and responses to feedback, moving from symbolic representation toward evidence-based, relationship-oriented communication. The same principle can guide other SOEs and technology-based institutions that communicate national achievements to publics who also experience their products and services directly.

The study has limitations. The number of informants was small, the context was limited to INKA's communication about the iE305/CLI-225 KRL, and the technical and non-technical categories are analytical rather than permanent classifications. Future research could test the layered architecture with more participants, compare responses to different content formats, or combine interviews with surveys and social media analytics to examine the links between information needs, understanding, and trust.

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