# Learning Techniques and Strategies to Produce Stand-Up Comedians

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**ABSTRACT**

Comedian is a profession that has been recognized since the 18th century. Although the comedian profession has been recognized, formal education or training to become a humanist and competent comedian is still very rarely carried out. "Pecahkan" is a stand-up comedy educational institution that consistently organizes training to become a solo comedian. The success of the "Palecah" institution in providing training, of course, is supported by the right learning techniques and strategies. An effective and efficient comedy education model will play an important role in producing comedians who are ethical, competent, and ready to enter the industrial world. Structured education for prospective comedians is highly necessary, considering the numerous cases of legal actions against comedians who are deemed to have offended and demeaned certain parties. This research was conducted to map the comedy education techniques and strategies carried out by "Pecahkan". The mapping of stand-up comedian learning techniques and strategies is expected to be able to make an important contribution to the study of human resource management, especially stand-up comedy. The method used in this study is observation, especially participatory observation. Observations were made by participating in "Tipis-Tipis Rispek #4" training, organized by the "Pecahkan" Institute. The results of this study show the effectiveness of the hybrid learning model in the comedian education process, as well as the importance of comedy learning strategies through the comedy stage laboratory.

**Keywords:** Ethics, Stand-up Comedy, Learning Techniques.

## INTRODUCTION

The art of comedy has a rich history in Indonesian society and culture, and the tradition of comedians has been documented as far back as the 9th century AD. The Kuti inscription, written on July 18, 840, mentions the existence of the "juru banol" profession. The word "abanol" means humor or comedy (Haryono, 2008). This evidence indicates that comedians hold a recognized and essential role in society. The realm of comedians and comedic presentations has consistently expanded and transformed within the Indonesian cultural context. One particularly flourishing genre of comedic performance in Indonesia is solo comedy shows or stand-up comedy. The Indonesian Comedy Artists Association (PASKI) has acknowledged the art of Stand-Up Comedy by presenting special awards to stand-up comedians at the Indonesian Comedy Awards (ANUKOM) in 2021 (source: https://mediaindonesia.com/, accessed on March 6, 2023). This recognition further solidifies the position of comedians as a recognized profession. Panji Pragiwaksono, a senior stand-up comedian in Indonesia, states that Stand-Up Comedy is not just a hobby but can also be a profession. Professional comedians can develop their careers as actors in films, TV series writers, and even comedy consultants (source: https://entertainment.kompas.com/, accessed on March 6, 2023).

Despite the acknowledgment of the comedian profession in society, there is still a shortage of formal educational institutions that cater to the training of aspiring comedians. So far, the community Standupindo has been the primary platform for learning stand-up comedy. Standupindo is a community formed to gather people interested in learning about stand-up comedy together (www.standupindo.id, accessed on March 6, 2023). With the growth of the comedy industry and the demand for more comedians, formal institutions for stand-up comedy training have emerged.

One of the institutions consistently providing structured stand-up comedy training is "Pecahkan". "Pecahkan" is an educational institution that provides paid training specifically designed for individuals aspiring to become comedians. The stand-up comedy learning process is systematically designed to produce comedians effectively and efficiently. The techniques and strategies for teaching stand-up comedy by the "Pecahkan" educational institution need to be researched to formulate a pattern for stand-up comedian learning process.

The techniques and strategies for teaching stand-up comedy are an essential part of the management of the arts. An effective and efficient comedy education model plays a crucial role in producing quality comedy artists ready to enter the entertainment industry. Mapping the techniques and strategies for teaching stand-up comedians is expected to make a significant contribution to the study of human resource management in the performing arts. The research methodology used in this study includes observation, particularly participatory observation, during the training program "Tipis-Tipis Rispek #4" organized by the Pecahkan institution.

Studies on comedy have been conducted for an extended period. Modern efforts to make comedy as an 'serious' subject of study emerged in 1914. This research was initiated by Francis Macdonald Cornford, a scholar of Ancient Greece who produced the work "The Origin of Attic Comedy" (Stott, 2005). Research that considers comedy as a formal subject has since grown and is conducted in various places, including Indonesia.

The exploration of comedy in Indonesia involves various academic perspectives, with language and literature fields playing a substantial role in contributing to comedic research. Comedy is examined linguistically and literarily to investigate the use of acronyms in comedy shows (Susdamita et al., 2015), non-conventional implicature in the show "Indonesia Lawak Klub" (Ardiansyah, Hendrawan H; Luluk, 2017), principles of cooperation in comedy shows (Arvianto, 2019), the role of pornography associations in humor discourse (Yuniawan, 2007), and humor discourse schemes in Indonesia (Fitri et al., 2019).

Comedy is also studied from a psychological perspective, particularly concerning comedians who are considered to have an association with schizophrenia (Ando et al., 2014). From a cultural perspective, research on comedy has been carried out to examine stand-up comedy as a cultural phenomenon in the Western culture. This research involves comparing Western culture today with its origins in the past and highlighting the changes that have occurred. The results reveal that stand-up comedy sharply reflects characteristics of contemporary Western culture, including individualism and neoliberalism, or more specifically, "mass individualism," an ideology of progress at any cost. In some cases of stand-up comedy, this means eliciting laughter at the expense of humanistic values, ecological values, and linguistic culture (Kawalec, 2020). Cultural perspective research on comedy is also conducted to understand how culture shapes perceptions of humor. It is found that bicultural participants from Hong Kong who prioritize Chinese icons tend to adopt a Chinese perspective on humor, leading to less positive evaluations of humorous individuals. In contrast, bicultural Hong Kong participants who prioritize Western icons tend to embrace a Western view of humor and have more positive evaluations of humorous individuals (Yue et al., 2016).

Technical aspects of comedy are studied to examine the five main factors that most researchers consider as reasons for generating laughter. The general theory suggests that what makes people laugh includes surprise, coherence, superiority, violation of judgment, and conditions. This research concludes that coherence, violation of judgment, and conditions significantly make people laugh, whereas surprise and superiority are not significant (Warren et al., 2021). Another study investigates the relationship between audience trust in comedians and the success of their humor. The results show that humor's success or failure is not solely due to the audience's trust in the comedian. Certain classes of humor, especially those related to racial and gender identities, are more easily trusted and accepted by the audience from those identities (Abrahams, 2020).

Creative aspects of comedy are studied to explore humor production by comedians in the era of social media. This research concludes that comedians are committed to joke writing and spend time digging into their own experiences and cultural exposure, which they then arrange as jokes. In performing this task, they are very concerned about whether the material they create represents their unique character (or "authentic") and is not just funny. They use social media to test material and build their profiles with potential audiences (Sturges, 2015).

Comedy is also examined through neurological research, which aims to reveal the relationship between neuron firing during a comedian's performance or creation of comedy material. The results show that a greater comedy experience is associated with decreased activation in the striatum and medial prefrontal cortex (mPFC) but increased activation in the temporal association area (TMP). Less experienced comedians manifest greater mPFC activation, reflecting their intentional search through the TMP association space. Conversely, professionals tend to reap the benefits of their spontaneous associations with reduced reliance on guided top-down search (Amir et al., 2016).

The relationship between humor and health is also

studied to examine the beneficial and harmful effects of laughter. This research proves that laughter is not entirely beneficial. The dangers it poses are direct and dose-related, with the highest risk associated with uncontrollable laughter. When comparing the benefits and risks of laughter, it can be concluded that laughter remains beneficial (Ferner & Aronson, 2013).

Social research on comedy is conducted to examine how stand-up comedy performances can be used to criticize the failures of ruling elites in the Nigerian state. The results reveal that stand-up comedy serves a utilitarian function in the realm of performing arts and literature. Stand-up comedy entertains, moralizes, satirizes, and educates a heterogeneous audience about various values and ethics of contemporary Nigerian society (Sesan, 2018). The mapping of comedy studies can be seen in the following figure:
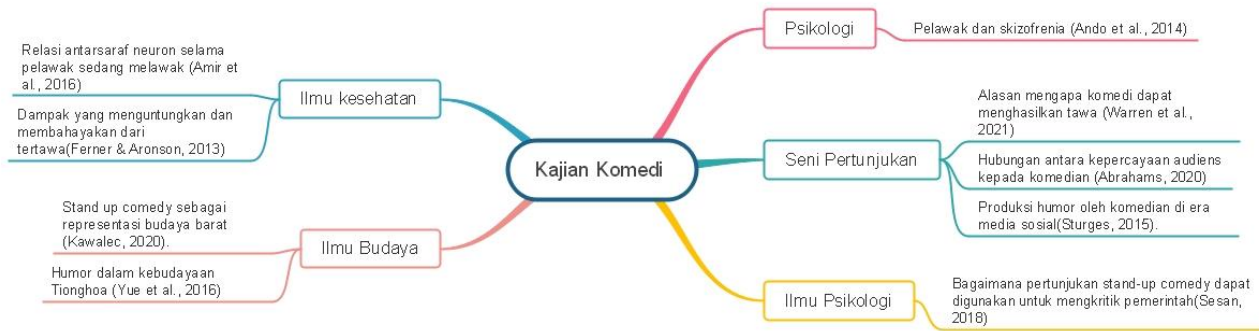


*Figure 1. Pemetaan Riset Komedi*

Based on the mapping of comedy studies that have been carried out, it is concluded that research on the development of human resources in the field of comedy still needs to be developed a lot. Comedy management research is planned to continue to be developed to be able to achieve a competitive advantage in the field of comedy. This research was conducted to fill the gap of research on comedy learning that has not been widely done.

Learning is a series of activities carried out by individuals to change their behavior as a result of interaction with their environment (Zainal Harifin, 2018) Bloom and Krath Wohl state that the learning process produces changes in three main aspects, namely cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects (Bloom, 1981)

1. Cognitive Aspects

The cognitive aspect includes six main indicators, namely the ability to master knowledge in the form of remembering and memorizing information, the ability to understand information with indicators able to interpret information, the ability to apply concepts to Pecahkan problems, the ability to analyze and describe a concept, the ability to make syntheses by combining supporting aspects, and the ability to evaluate (Bloom, 1981)

2. Affective Aspect

This aspect consists of five levels of indicators, namely; first, the recognition of something and the desire to accept it, actively responding and participating, accepting and adhering to values, organizing and integrating values that are believed, and finally the practice of values as part of the individual's way of life (Bloom, 1981)

3. Psychomotor Ascpect

This aspect consists of five main indicators, including imitation (imitating movements), use (using concepts to perform movements), precision (performing movements correctly), sequencing (performing several movements correctly in a certain sequence), and naturalization (performing movements smoothly and naturally).

Learning is a process concerning cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects that enable individuals to develop their understanding, values, and skills through interaction with their environment. Learning objectives are achieved through learning strategies. Learning strategies are methods, techniques, and tactics used by a teacher to teach students in class to achieve expected targets (Panggabean et al., 2021). Another opinion states that a learning strategy is a set (one or more) procedures that a person uses to facilitate the execution of a learning task (Warr & Downing, 2000). According to Slameto (2010), the learning strategy will answer the following 3 things, namely; first

1. Related to who does what and uses what tools in the learning process, this activity concerns the role of sources, the use of materials, and learning aids.

2. Related to how to carry out learning tasks that have been defined (analysis results) so that the task can provide optimal results, where this activity concerns learning methods and techniques.

3. Related to when and where learning activities are carried out and how long they are carried out.

## METHOD

This study aims to find out how stand-up comedy learning techniques and strategies by educational institutions "Pecahkan", especially Tipis-Tipis Rispek #4 programs. To accommodate these needs, this research is qualitative descriptive with data search techniques in the form of participatory observation. Bodgan stated that participation observation is research characterized by social interaction between researchers and subjects in the subject environment (Moleong, 2007).

Observation of participation was carried out during the 4-week workshop Tipis Tipis Rispek #4 by the Pecahkan institution. Data in the form of conversation recordings, workshop recordings, and teaching materials were then analyzed to describe comedy learning techniques and strategies carried out by the Pecahkan institution. The analysis was carried out with a content analysis model on observation notes, documents, and learning materials given in the Tipis Rispek #4 workshop. To perform content analysis, the text to be studied is grouped into several categories and then analyzed using conceptual analysis or relationship analysis. Following the purpose of the study, the analytical method used in this study is conceptual analysis.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Stand-Up Comedy Learning Technique

Comedy is a profession that has been recognized for its existence in Indonesia (especially in Java) since 840 BC (Haryono, 2008). Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia, Sandiaga Uni stated that comedians are creative economy actors through creative content creation it is a very promising profession (www.antaranews.com, accessed September 15, 2023). Although comedian is a profession that has begun to be recognized, there are still very few or no formal schools for comedy learning in Indonesia.

Comedy learning, especially stand-up comedy in Indonesia, has been happening in the context of informal learning through communities. Standupindo is a community that facilitates the learning of stand-up comedy in Indonesia, which has a network in almost every province in Indonesia. Each community holds a program to learn stand-up comedy and provides a stage to learn and test stand-up material.

As the largest stand-up comedy community in Indonesia, standupindo has a main program in the form of developing the skills of comedians. Standupindo Joga is one of the communities that consistently holds two programs, namely comic sharing and open mic. Sharing Komika is held as a mentoring program for writing comedy material. The comic-sharing program is free but requires anyone who attends to buy food or drinks on-site. The event was published through the Instagram

media of the Yogyakarta standup community, namely @standupindo_jgj.



Figure 4. Publication of Standupindo Jogja Comic Sharing Program
Source: Instagram @standupindojgj

In addition to the comic-sharing program, the Standupindo Jogja community also consistently holds an Open Mic program. The Open Mic program is the main program of every community standup in Indonesia, where comedians can try comedy material and practice their performances on stage. The Standupindo community does not charge for anyone who will come and watch the open mic event. All visitors and performers are only required to purchase food and beverages on-site. An example of the publication of an open mic event at Instagram Standupindo Jogja can be seen in Figure 05.



Figure 5. Publication of Open Mic Standupindo Jogja Program
Source: Instagram @standupindojgj

In Indonesia, the typical method for acquiring stand-up comedy skills involves participation in community-based learning. This approach has its pros and cons. On the positive side, community-based education is cost-effective, widely accessible, and provides equal opportunities for all. Despite these benefits, it comes with drawbacks such as non-standardized learning processes, a lack of structure, and a heavy reliance on volunteers as instructors. Additionally, learners investing their time in community-based learning may face significant time commitments. Given these challenges, there is a recognized need in Indonesia for a formalized and structured institution dedicated to comedy education.

Comika Pecahkan was founded to address the demand for a well-organized and methodical stand-up comedy educational establishment. Specializing in Stand-up Comedy, Comika Pecahkan aims to nurture emerging comedians by offering a range of educational products, including books, online classes, webinars, and workshops (www.pecahkan.com, accessed October 15, 2023). Comika Pecahkan Institute designed standup comedy learning through three paths, namely literature, practice, and workshop.

## 1. The Book Titled "Pecahkan"

The book "Pecahkan" was written by Panji Pragiwaksono and Ulwan Fakhri. This book contains a guide to the theory, techniques, and practice of stand-up comedy writing. This book contains 232 pages, and consists of 18 chapters that can be classified into two groups of information. Chapters 1-7 are guidelines for writing standup comedy material, chapters 8-12 are guidelines for standup practice and practice on stage, and chapters 13-18 are guidelines for becoming a professional comedian. The book Pecahkan is easily accessible to anyone and can be purchased through online stores.

Figure 6. Book sales page view Solve
Source: www.tokopedia.com

## 2. Workshop

Tipis-Tipis Rispek #4 is a learning activity for basic Stand-upComedy techniques with teachers Pandji Pragiwaksono, Ridwan Remin, Dany Beler, Awwe and Ulwan Fakhri consisting of several hybrid meetings (www.pecahkan.com, accessed October 15, 2023). Tipis-Tipis Rispek workshop is a paid class to learn standup comedy. This class is designed to be carried out for 5 weeks with the following material:

### a. Create a unique Jokes premise

In this session, trainees got the basics of making standup comedy material. Standup comedy material comes from a very personal anxiety. At this stage, participants learn to recognize their perspective in looking at the surrounding environment and find interesting phenomena to discuss. The humor that arises on the standup comedy stage comes from comedians' unique opinions on the world. Comedian standup comedians (called Comic) begin composing their comedic material by creating a premise. The premise contains personal views, namely opinions, and attitudes towards the situation in the surrounding environment. The premise can come from personal situations in the form of physical appearance, life background, nature, and principles of life. The premise can also contain opinions on situations in the surrounding environment, issues and events that many people are talking about, or daily events. The premise does not produce laughter, but it is very important to attract the attention of the audience to listen to the standup material presented.

Figure 7. Hybrid class digs the premise
Source: Comika Pecahkan Documentation

### b. Structuring the Jokes Setup

The second session of the Tipis Tipis Rispek #4 workshop was to compile a jokes setup with speaker Ridwan Remin, a comedian who won the Indonesian Stand-upComedy competition Kompas TV. In the session, the setup is defined as a sentence that contains assumptions to lead the audience's thoughts in the

direction planned by the comedian. Through the setup delivered, a comedian directs the audience to build certain assumptions, which then these assumptions will be broken using a punchline. The setup in standup comedy material consists of premises that contain opinions and points of view, plus sentences that build assumptions. The setup should make sense and be natural so that the audience can digest and build perceptions exactly as the comedian expects.

TV's Indonesian stand-up comedy competition. In this session, trainees learned to understand the structure of comedy material, understand punchlines, get to know the variety of punchlines, and practice making punchlines. Punchline is creating cuteness by breaking assumptions in the audience's mind. The audience laughs because of the element of surprise because the assumptions that have been built through the premise and directed with the jokes set-up, are broken with a jokes punchline.



Figure 8. Hybrid class Structuring setup
Source: Comika Pecahkan Documentation



Figure 10. Hybrid class punchline-making
Source: Comika Pecahkan Documentation

### c. Strengthening Jokes Setup with Act-Out

Participants of the workshop Tipis Tipis Rispek #4 learned about acting out in standup comedy performances. Acting out serves to strengthen the comedic material delivered by comedians on stage. Act out or the way of delivering comedy material, even plays a bigger role in creating cuteness on stage.



Figure 9. Hybrid class setup
Source: Comika Pecahkan Documentation

### d. Squeeze the Jokes Punchline to Dry

The material squeezes the punchline dry in the workshop Tipis Tipis Rispek #4 delivered by David Nurbianto. David Nurbianto is the champion of Kompas

### e. Comedy buddy

Comedy Buddy is a mentoring program in the preparation of comedy material. This program is specifically held for participants of the offline Tipis-Tipis Riskpek #4 workshop. Participants who already have written materials in the form of premises, setups, and punchlines will get facilities to develop standup materials to be ready to be performed on stage. Danny Beler as a mentor is in charge of directing and providing consideration for the development of participants' comedy material.

### f. The Final Test

The final graduation exam for workshop participants Tipis Tipis Rispek #4 is a moment where workshop participants are allowed to perform on the community comedy standup stage in Jakarta. This practice of performing is a very important space for aspiring comedians to overcome fears, find the right persona, and practice communication skills.

### 3. Open House

Open House is a program that facilitates comedians to test their comedy material. Open House is a free open mic for beginners and amateur comedians to try their Stand-upComedy material live at Comika Headquarters every Tuesday from 19.00 - 21.00 WIB (www.pecahkan.com, accessed October 15, 2023). Open house programs are even often used by professional

comedians to test the material that will be presented on a professional stage.

## B. Comika Comedy Stand-up learning curriculum

Learning is a series of mental and physical activities to obtain a change in behavior as a result of individual experiences in interaction with their environment which concerns cognitive, affective, and psychomotor (Zainal Harifin, 2018) Bloom and Krath Wohl (Bloom, 1981) stated that every aspect of learning outcomes can be measured through the following indicators:

### 1. Cognitive Aspects of Cognitive

Cognitive aspects consist of 6 indicators, namely; a. Knowledge (remembering, memorizing), b. Comprehension (interpreting), c. Application (using concepts, solving problems), d. Analysis (describing a concept), e. Synthesis (combining values, methods, ideas, etc.), f. Evaluation (sharing values, ideas, methods, etc.).

### 2. Affective Aspect

The affective aspect consists of 5 levels of infixators, namely; a. Recognition (wanting to receive, being aware of something), b. Respond (actively participate), c. Appreciation (receiving values, being loyal to values), d. Organizing (linking values that are believed), e. Practice (making values part of the pattern of life).

### 3. The psychomotor aspect

The psychomotor aspect consists of 5 indicators, namely; a. Imitation (imitation of motion), b. Use of concepts (using concepts to perform motion), c. Accuracy (doing motion correctly), d. Circuit (correctly performing several movements at once), e. Naturalization (reasonable motion).

Based on this learning theory, the comedy learning process in the Tipis Tipis Rispek #4 workshop can be described through figure 11 below. Learning strategies through the book titled Pecahkan, Tipis-Tipis Rispek #4 workshop and Open house each have a contribution in building competence of stand-up comedians. The book Pecahkan contributes greatly in providing an understanding of the basic concepts of stand-up comedy and the steps that can be taken to become a professional stand-up comedian. Pecahkan book contributes a lot in developing the cognitive aspects of comedians. Workshop Tipis-Tipis Rispek is designed to provide understanding, attitude and skills in compiling and delivering stand-up comedy material. The Tipis-Tipis Rispek workshop contributed greatly to developing the attitude aspects of stand-up comedians. The Open House program at Comika headquarters provides opportunities in the development of psychomotor aspects of

comedians. Stand Up Comedian get the opportunity to perform, test the material, and build a persona through performance rehearsals.

## CONCLUSIONS

Lembaga Comika Pecahkan is an organization that professionally organizes paid education stand-upcomedy. This institution has more structured instruments and curriculum than the stand up community. The learning instruments in question are Pecahkan books, Tipis-Tipis Rispek workshops, and Comika Open House programs. The learning curriculum has been designed so that ordinary people can learn and process into comedians. Learning strategies with a hybrid method and utilizing three learning models are considered effective to build cognitive, affective and psychomotor trainees to be able to become stand-up comedians. The comedy learning model cannot be done with only one form, but the need to combine several forms of learning so that the educational process can run well. However, this curriculum does not contain important content about standup comedy professional ethics.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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