

**THE ROLE OF PROJECT LEADER AND STRATEGIST IN  
DEVELOPING AN INTEGRAL COMMUNICATION PROGRAM TO  
DRIVE AWARENESS AND SALES OF SOBAT SAMBAT PRO (A PAID  
COUNSELING SERVICE) BY PKBI CENTRAL JAVA**

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**ABSTRACT**

Sobat Sambat Pro is a premium psychological counseling service launched by PILAR PKBI Central Java to support youth mental health. Since its introduction in 2024, the service has struggled with low brand awareness and limited sales conversion, particularly among university students in Semarang. To address these challenges, an Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) program was designed to increase visibility and stimulate service uptake within the target demographic.

The program employed five IMC tools—advertising, content marketing, public relations, event marketing, and sales promotion—to build a coherent and engaging communication experience. Key tactics included the offline brand activation with journaling event, strategic content marketing across Instagram, and the use of advertising to amplify reach. Emotional storytelling, experiential engagement, and timely cultural references were central to the messaging approach.

Performance evaluation against key metrics showed that content marketing, supported by targeted advertising, played the most significant role in generating awareness. Viral, trend-based content achieved high reach and engagement, while digital voucher promotions proved effective in driving conversions. Ultimately, the campaign exceeded both awareness and sales targets, highlighting the program's effectiveness in translating emotional and contextual relevance into measurable behavioral outcomes.

**Keywords:** Youth mental health, Integrated marketing communication, Counseling service, Brand perception, Sales promotion, Digital campaign, Semarang, PKBI, Sobat Sambat Pro, Project Leader, Strategist

## BACKGROUND

Over the past two years, mental health awareness among Indonesian university students has significantly increased, alongside a growing number seeking professional psychological support. A study at Universitas Sebelas Maret revealed that 26.9% of students experienced mild depression, 18.5% moderate depression, and 9.3% severe depression, with 86.8% reporting high anxiety levels (Setyanto, 2023). Similarly, Putri (2023) found that 64.1% of students were willing to seek counselling, 55.6% would visit a psychologist, and 68.3% would consult a psychiatrist.

This rise in awareness is supported by institutional efforts, such as the Indonesian Ministry of Education's integration of mental health services into school health programs. In Jakarta, 86.67% of public schools offer mental health education, 53.3% conduct screenings, and 80% provide counselling (Yani et al., 2025). Depression prevalence is also notably higher among urban youth (2.5%) and those from higher socioeconomic backgrounds (2.2%) (BKPK, 2023), aligning with trends in Semarang where economic development is paralleled by greater service access.

Nationally, students show increased preference for application-based counselling services. Among 101 students surveyed (Mirawati et al., 2023), 75.2% understood the cost of such

services, and 82.2% were willing to pay depending on the service's relevance to their needs. Additionally, 61.4% favored paid services with prompt responses, highlighting a preference for timely and professional support.

In Semarang, a survey of 54 youth aged 18–24 indicated that 66.7% rated their interest in seeking professional help at levels 4 or 5 (on a 5-point scale), suggesting high interest and positive shifts in attitudes toward mental health care.

The Indonesian Family Planning Association (PKBI) has contributed significantly to youth well-being through programs like PILAR (Pusat Informasi dan Layanan Remaja). PILAR offers comprehensive sexuality education, youth-friendly health counselling, and empowerment initiatives. One key initiative is Sobat Sambat, a free counselling service delivered by trained peer counsellors. Between 2023 and 2024, the service assisted 271 clients, with the majority seeking help for mental health concerns (159 cases), followed by reproductive health (49 cases).

To meet rising demand and enhance service quality, Sobat Sambat Pro was launched in December 2024. This paid service connects youth with licensed psychologists at affordable rates (Rp100,000 online, Rp200,000 offline), while revenues support other PKBI empowerment programs. Despite its potential,

initial uptake has been low, with only one client recorded between December 2024 and February 2025.

Sobat Sambat Pro competes with established platforms like Halodoc, Alodokter, Psikologimu, and Ibunda, which offer flexible consultations, mental health screenings, and medication services. While competitors boast more experienced professionals, Sobat Sambat Pro positions itself as uniquely youth-friendly with accessible pricing and a strong community reputation.

Marketing strategies vary among platforms. While competitors use influencer partnerships and live content, Sobat Sambat Pro relies primarily on Instagram content. Nevertheless, its affordability (Rp100,000–Rp200,000) and foundation of trust from Sobat Sambat provide a strong basis for future growth. Though it currently lacks official ratings, its predecessor's positive impact and client base of over 200 users suggest promising prospects.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The primary objective of this project is to enhance the visibility and utilization of Sobat Sambat Pro, a paid youth-friendly counselling service developed by PKBI Central Java. In response to the rising demand for accessible and professional mental health services among university students, this initiative seeks to

strengthen both awareness and engagement through targeted promotional efforts. The specific goals are:

1. To achieve a 25% increase in awareness of Sobat Sambat Pro among a targeted sample of 54 university students in Semarang who were exposed to the campaign interventions during the implementation phase.
2. To increase the number of paying clients using Sobat Sambat Pro by 12 clients within two months, representing a projected 1200% growth from the initial baseline.

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The campaign strategy for Sobat Sambat Pro is guided by the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) model, which serves as the conceptual framework for planning, execution, and evaluation. IMC is a structured, research-driven communication approach that integrates various promotional tools to deliver a consistent brand message across multiple channels (Ang, 2021). It supports the development of campaigns that align brand communication with target audience behavior and ensures that messaging remains clear, unified, and effective over time.

This framework is particularly useful in addressing common challenges within the

consumer decision journey, often visualized through the sales funnel, where obstacles such as low awareness, low engagement, and lack of motivation may prevent potential users from converting into actual clients. Through the IMC model, this campaign seeks to guide students from awareness to action by leveraging coordinated marketing tactics.

The IMC-based conceptual framework for Sobat Sambat Pro consists of the following core components:

1. Use of Complementary Communication Tools. Including social media marketing, public relations, advertising, and event marketing to reach the target audience effectively.
2. Channel Optimization for Maximum Reach. Prioritizing affordable and accessible platforms such as Instagram, peer-to-peer promotion, and offline events to target university students in Semarang.
3. Consistent Brand Identity. Ensuring that the campaign maintains a uniform "look, feel, and voice" across all content, reinforcing the brand's image as youth-friendly and professional.
4. Compelling and Shareable Content. Creating emotionally engaging content such as testimonial reels, aftermovies,

and educational posts that resonate with the mental health concerns of youth.

5. Coordinated Execution. Aligning all campaign activities to deliver a seamless and impactful marketing experience.

By applying this framework, the campaign aims to overcome barriers in the decision-making process—including apathy, creative saturation, and complexity—through emotional storytelling, quality visuals, targeted promotions, and consistent communication. This structure is expected to improve brand positioning, increase student engagement, and ultimately drive the adoption of Sobat Sambat Pro's paid mental health services.

## COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

### 1. Segmentation and Targeting

#### *Segmentation*

The segmentation for the Sobat Sambat Pro campaign was based on four key dimensions:

- **Demographic:** University students aged 18–24 years from diverse gender identities, primarily within socioeconomic class C (monthly income of IDR 2,000,000–4,000,000).
- **Geographic:** Located in Semarang, Central Java.
- **Psychographic:** Interested in education, mental health, and self-development. They value mental well-being, seek

stigma-free services, and are highly active on social media.

- **Behavioral:** Tend to seek psychological support when needed, often begin with online self-help content, and are receptive to premium services if presented in a youth-relevant and inclusive manner.

### ***Targeting***

- **Primary Target:** University students in Semarang who experience academic stress, actively use social media, and are open to stigma-free online counseling services.
- **Secondary Target:** Final-year students under pressure from thesis or final projects; those who previously used the free Sobat Sambat service and are now considering professional-level support; and students interested in emotional well-being and self-development.

## **2. Positioning, Branding, and Key Message**

### ***Positioning***

PILAR PKBI positions itself as a youth-friendly mental health NGO that provides affordable and inclusive services tailored to students. The brand's core attributes are:

- **Youth-Friendly:** Creating a safe, non-judgmental, and relatable environment for students.

- **Affordable:** Ensuring access to professional counseling without financial burden.

- **Inclusive and Supportive:** Welcoming students of all backgrounds and identities.

The campaign emphasized PILAR PKBI as a dependable mental health partner during students' academic journey, reinforcing its role in navigating stress while promoting emotional well-being.

Survey data supported this positioning:

- Most respondents (aged 18–23) valued youth-friendly services.
- Psychologist experience was the top factor in choosing paid services, followed by pricing — emphasizing the importance of affordability.
- Social stigma was a notable barrier for some respondents, reinforcing the need for inclusive, judgment-free communication.

### ***Branding***

Brand identity followed the Layanan Ramah Remaja principles long associated with PKBI. Design choices—modern, minimalist visuals with bright and soft tones—reflected the dynamic and youthful nature of the audience. This approach maintained consistency with the NGO's existing brand while enhancing appeal to digital-native students.

### ***Key Message***

#### **#ASpaceWhereYOUthBelong**

This message encapsulated Sobat Sambat Pro's brand promise: professional mental health support that is youth-oriented, affordable, inclusive, and stigma-free.

### **3. Media Strategy**

Following Baron & Sissors (2010), the campaign adopted a media mix strategy aimed at delivering the right message to the right audience through the most cost-effective channels. It combined online and offline tactics to enhance reach, credibility, and engagement.

#### ***Online Media Strategy***

- **Paid Media (Advertising):** A 4-day teaser campaign via Instagram Stories and Reels reached over 1,400 users with a budget of IDR 135,000, effectively building awareness and driving traffic toward the service.
- **Owned Media (Instagram Content):** Content was shared via the official @pilar\_pkbi account, including mental health tips, educational posts, and expert insights. This strengthened audience relationships and maintained regular engagement.
- **Earned Media (Public Relations):** The campaign engaged mental health advocates and earned media coverage through online publications, helping

build trust and authority in the mental health space.

#### ***Offline Media Strategy***

An experiential event, *Writing from Within – Kelola Stres dengan Menulis*, provided a tangible, emotionally resonant brand experience. Participants explored journaling as a method for managing stress. The event reinforced Sobat Sambat Pro's commitment to holistic, student-centered support and positioned the service as both professional and approachable.

## **DESIGN PLANNING OF CREATIVE COMMUNICATION WORK OBJECT: Implementation Phase as Project Leader and Strategist**

#### ***Role as Project Leader***

The role of Project Leader encompassed comprehensive coordination and operational supervision throughout the campaign's lifecycle. This position was pivotal in translating the client's objectives into a structured action plan, while simultaneously ensuring seamless internal alignment across multiple functions including creative, strategy, and event execution.

During the pre-execution phase, initial engagement with PKBI Central Java laid the groundwork for expectation alignment and strategic direction. The project leader facilitated a kick-off meeting to define campaign goals, timelines, and deliverables. Following this, the

internal team structure was formalized, assigning clear roles to team members, which enabled accountability and task clarity. To ensure effective project tracking, the leader developed multiple operational tools—including content calendars, cash flow monitors, and event trackers—using collaborative platforms like Google Sheets.

Budget management was a critical aspect of the planning process. The campaign prioritized cost efficiency by leveraging digital channels and in-house design resources, keeping expenditures aligned with the limited financial capacity of a non-profit client. Risk mitigation strategies were also devised, including contingency plans for low sign-up rates, such as offering digital vouchers or adjusting campaign duration.

Throughout the execution phase, daily task coordination and internal syncing were conducted via group chats and weekly stand-ups, ensuring fluid communication and quick decision-making. The project leader maintained oversight over content production and final approval, while also managing external communication with stakeholders. This included aligning with PKBI's in-house team on approvals and updating the client on weekly progress.

Real-time challenges such as design delays or coordination issues were addressed through immediate team interventions, with emphasis on

collaborative problem-solving. For example, during a delay in Instagram content rollout, responsibilities were redistributed among available team members, avoiding disruption to the publishing schedule.

In the post-execution phase, the project leader led a performance review, collecting campaign KPIs including reach, engagement, and counseling conversion. The financial report highlighted that the campaign was executed below budget, maximizing impact within limited resources. Counseling conversions were analyzed based on source attribution, confirming the effectiveness of key tactics such as the journaling event and voucher strategy. A final campaign report was presented to the client, including key results, insights, and suggested improvements for future programming.

### ***Role as Strategist***

In parallel, the Strategist was responsible for the campaign's intellectual and creative direction, grounded in audience insights and informed by the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) framework. This role required translating research into actionable strategy across media, message, and content formats.

During the pre-execution phase, audience research indicated that Gen Z respondents in Semarang, particularly university students, were increasingly open to counseling services but still hesitant due to stigma. Moreover, journaling

emerged as a popular coping mechanism, cited by 40.7% of survey respondents. These insights shaped the campaign's central message: positioning Sobat Sambat Pro as a safe, youth-friendly, and affordable space for emotional support.

Strategically, the campaign integrated five IMC tools—advertising, content marketing, public relations, event marketing, and sales promotion—to ensure message consistency and cross-platform reinforcement. Media planning prioritized Instagram as the primary platform due to its dominance among Gen Z users. A measurement framework was established to track performance across awareness, engagement, and conversion metrics.

In the execution phase, the strategist implemented a phased content rollout guided by the AIDA model (Awareness, Interest, Desire, Action). A total of 19 content pieces were created, combining educational storytelling, emotional hooks, and actionable call-to-actions. The campaign leveraged Instagram Reels, Carousels, and Stories, producing high-performing content such as the “Jumbo” mental health Reel, which achieved over 44,000 views. Advertising was optimized through a four-day targeted Instagram ad campaign that amplified reach. Additionally, PR activation involved collaboration with youth-focused communities such as Her Sphere and university organizations,

enhancing credibility through third-party advocacy. Sales promotion efforts centered on digital vouchers offering 20% discounts, which were distributed via Instagram and redeemed at both online and offline counseling sessions.

To deepen emotional connection and facilitate experiential engagement, a brand activation event titled “*Writing From Within*” was executed. This journaling workshop combined expert-led discussions with hands-on journaling sessions, drawing in 15 participants—five of whom later converted into paying clients.

In the post-execution phase, analytics indicated a 25% increase in brand awareness and a total of 14 conversions, exceeding the initial target of 12. Conversion data were triangulated across event, voucher, and organic channels to assess campaign effectiveness. A post-campaign reflection emphasized the importance of trend-based storytelling, emotional relatability, and incentive-driven tactics. Strategic recommendations included expanding to TikTok, improving CTA clarity, and developing retention tools such as exclusive follow-up sessions.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Sobat Sambat Pro campaign demonstrated measurable success in addressing its primary communication objectives: raising brand awareness and increasing service uptake among university students in Semarang. Awareness rose



significantly following the campaign's rollout, with pre- and post-survey data showing a leap from only 7.4% of respondents correctly identifying the brand to full recognition among 100% of participants. This reflects an 85.9% increase in brand awareness, attributed to a cohesive integration of digital content marketing, paid media, and offline engagement.

In terms of behavioral outcomes, the campaign exceeded its conversion target by securing 14 new clients, against an original goal of 12. Voucher-based sales promotions proved to be the most effective conversion tool, while experiential strategies—such as the journaling booth—contributed not only to emotional engagement but also direct service uptake. These findings underscore the importance of both cognitive and affective touchpoints in driving action within mental health communication.

### **Evaluation of Program Effectivity**

The campaign's success was largely attributed to trend-based content, particularly the “JUMBO” mental health reel, which gained substantial traction due to its relevance to a popular Indonesian film. This content achieved nearly 40,000 views and over 6,000 likes, demonstrating how trend riding and contextual storytelling can significantly enhance engagement. Performance metrics further validated impact: content engagement increased by 73%, content reach rose by 317.33%, and

follower growth exceeded expectations at 5.13%. The strategic balance of high-performing paid campaigns, narrative cohesion, and visually consistent branding ensured high message recall and brand salience. Sales promotions, especially the time-sensitive digital voucher, proved to be powerful behavioral nudges, while experiential marketing enhanced trust-building and emotional connection.

### **Job Evaluation**

#### ***Project Leader***

As the project leader, responsibilities included managing cross-functional collaboration and maintaining effective communication with stakeholders. A proactive leadership approach facilitated problem resolution and maintained campaign momentum. However, challenges emerged, including delays in content approval from PKBI's internal team and inconsistencies during multi-partner collaborations. These were managed through consistent stakeholder engagement and flexible content adjustments.

#### ***Strategist***

The strategist played a key role in designing trend-based content strategies that resonated with the target audience. Emphasis was placed on leveraging Instagram Reels, which significantly enhanced reach and audience interaction. Emotional storytelling was consistently applied, fostering audience engagement and connection. Balancing

innovative content with brand consistency, however, remained a continuous challenge, especially given the dynamic preferences of university students.

### ***Strategic Insights***

The campaign highlighted several critical strategic insights:

1. **Trend-Riding Content:** Aligning content with trending topics, such as the “JUMBO” movie, was instrumental in boosting reach and engagement.
2. **Emotional Validation:** Content that acknowledged emotional struggles led to higher interaction, including saves and shares, affirming the importance of relatable storytelling.
3. **Short, Intensive Promotions:** Brief, targeted ad campaigns (such as a four-day ad sprint) proved more effective than prolonged promotions.
4. **Community Collaboration:** Partnering with micro-communities, like student organizations, enhanced authenticity and built trust.
5. **Retargeting Strategies:** Follow-up messages to previously engaged audiences improved conversion rates, emphasizing the need for a more comprehensive retargeting plan in future campaigns.

### **Discussion**

Sobat Sambat Pro campaign’s success was significantly driven by digital platforms, particularly Instagram, where the integration of emotional storytelling and trend-based content captured the audience's attention effectively. The event marketing component, including the journaling workshop, successfully blended emotional engagement with experiential interaction, directly contributing to client acquisition. However, the campaign’s heavy reliance on Instagram posed challenges in terms of diversification. Future strategies should focus on platform diversification and incorporating long-term retention mechanisms, such as newsletters and community engagement initiatives, to maintain post-campaign interaction.

### **CLOSING**

As the culmination of a multi-dimensional campaign effort, this chapter presents a comprehensive reflection on the strategic and operational outcomes achieved through the Sobat Sambat Pro project. The dual roles undertaken by the author, as both Project Leader and Strategist, facilitated a holistic approach to integrated communication within the context of a paid mental health service. This chapter presents key conclusions, strategic recommendations, and implications that may

serve as valuable insights for practitioners and researchers in the field of mental health communication.

## **Conclusion**

The Sobat Sambat Pro campaign successfully achieved its two primary objectives: increasing public awareness and driving service uptake for a paid mental health service targeting university students aged 18 to 24 in Semarang. The strategic use of integrated communication methods, particularly through digital platforms like Instagram, significantly contributed to achieving these goals. Collaborative partnerships and offline activations further reinforced the campaign's emotional messaging, making the brand experience relatable and accessible to the target audience.

The first objective—to increase brand awareness—was successfully achieved, with 96.3% of respondents identifying Sobat Sambat Pro as a youth-friendly counseling service, indicating strong message fidelity. Additionally, 77.8% viewed it as a safe, stigma-free space, and 75.9% saw it as promoting inclusive counseling, reflecting effective communication of emotional accessibility. Affordability was recognized by 72.2%, confirming that the brand was perceived as accessible without creating confusion about it being a free service—only 1.9% held that misconception. However, only 68.5% associated the brand directly with mental health support,

suggesting a potential messaging gap. While overall awareness increased significantly, reinforcing the core function of psychological counseling may be necessary in future strategies.

The second objective, driving service conversion with a target of 12 new clients, was also surpassed, with a total of 14 client acquisitions. Key factors contributing to this outcome included in-person engagements through the Journaling Booth event, resulting in 5 new clients, and targeted voucher promotions, which accounted for 7 additional conversions. Additionally, two clients were directly acquired through online content, indicating the success of the campaign's strategy in converting awareness into tangible actions.

The dual responsibility of Project Leader and Strategist allowed for a comprehensive approach that linked planning with practical execution, facilitating agility in managing resource limitations, scheduling conflicts, and real-time decision-making. This campaign demonstrated that a balanced approach combining empathetic messaging, youth-centered strategies, and data-driven execution can effectively engage and convert young audiences within a nonprofit context. The positive results underscore the strategic and practical value of integrating communication efforts when promoting paid mental health services.

## Suggestions

To enhance the effectiveness of future campaigns within the mental health and paid counseling service sectors, several strategic recommendations arise from the Sobat Sambat Pro experience:

1. Reframe Value as Relatability, Not Solely Professionalism.

Future campaigns should position counseling as a personally empowering experience rather than merely a professional service. Messaging should focus on providing emotional support in an accessible and non-judgmental manner, especially within contexts where mental health services are often perceived as either clinical or purely welfare-driven.

2. Bridge Awareness and Action with Emotionally Aligned Journeys.

Raising awareness alone is insufficient; campaigns must minimize the gap between recognition and action. Seamless, emotionally aligned service journeys—where discovery naturally progresses to a low-barrier action—can reduce hesitation. Integrating simple booking flows that resonate with the audience's emotional state (e.g., curiosity or stress) is crucial for improving conversion rates.

3. Leverage Peer Advocacy as a Core Strategy.

Peer influence remains underutilized despite its potential. Designing structured peer-driven promotion, such as student ambassador programs or storytelling campaigns, could significantly increase engagement. In community-oriented student environments, peer validation holds substantial influence, surpassing even algorithm-driven visibility.

4. Maintain Visual and Narrative Consistency to Build Trust.

Maintaining a consistent visual identity and empathetic tone across all communication formats is essential to fostering trust. Using a calm and relatable visual approach while consistently applying informal, youth-friendly language can reduce perceived barriers and enhance the brand's credibility among young audiences.

5. Diversify Platforms and Content Formats for Broader Engagement.

Relying solely on Instagram limits audience reach and engagement depth. Expanding to platforms such as TikTok for trend-based storytelling and WhatsApp for community building could enrich audience interaction.

Additionally, incorporating interactive content—like quizzes and live sessions—can foster sustained engagement.

6. Optimize the Conversion Funnel with Real-Time Feedback.

Real-time analytics are essential for agile campaign management. Establishing performance dashboards and incorporating automated feedback mechanisms would enable more dynamic content adjustments, particularly when addressing evolving audience preferences.

7. Strengthen Long-Term Community Engagement Beyond Campaign Cycles.

Sustaining emotional connection requires ongoing engagement beyond short-term campaigns. Initiatives such as private journaling challenges, mental health support groups, and recurring community events could enhance user loyalty and foster a sense of belonging, crucial for retaining young clients.

## **Implication**

The Sobat Sambat Pro campaign contributes to the broader discourse on promoting paid psychological services within a youth demographic. The findings highlight the critical role of trust-building, relatable messaging, and community engagement in overcoming the

challenges associated with mental health communication. For practitioners, the key takeaway is that blending precision in media strategy with genuine emotional outreach can significantly enhance both social impact and client acquisition.

From a theoretical perspective, this study underscores the practical relevance of integrated communication models, emphasizing the importance of adaptive leadership, stakeholder-centric planning, and data-driven decision-making. These insights provide a foundation for future research on behavior change communication within the mental health sector, particularly when addressing young audiences in resource-constrained environments.

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