



## Social Media Instagram as a News Reference for Journalism Students

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### DOI:

10.22437/jkam.v8i1.26176

### Article History:

#### Received:

17/09/2023

#### Revised:

10/02/2024

#### Accepted:

13/06/2024

### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the use of Instagram as a reference source by journalism students in the digital era. As technological advancements continue to transform communication landscapes, social media has emerged as a critical medium for information dissemination. Using a qualitative research design, data were gathered through questionnaires and interviews with journalism students. The findings indicate that Instagram significantly supports students' news production processes, primarily due to its accessibility, immediacy, and diverse content. Students are not merely passive recipients of information; they actively engage with and disseminate news obtained from the platform. Furthermore, the study finds that information sourced from Instagram is increasingly perceived as credible and is integrated into journalistic writing practices. These results underscore the platform's expanding role in shaping contemporary news-gathering behaviors among aspiring journalists, reflecting broader shifts in media consumption patterns in the digital age.

**Keywords:** Digital Era; Instagram; Journalism; News Reference; Social Media

### INTRODUCTION

This study discusses the utilization of the social media platform Instagram as a reference source for Journalism students in the digital era. Several previous studies are relevant to this topic. First, notes that Journalism students and social media are inseparable; many Journalism students choose to use social media as a reference source for news gathering. Similarly, Rosemarwati and Lindawati (2019) argue that the use of information from social media, particularly Instagram, as a news reference is a widespread modern phenomenon that Journalism students utilize as a news source. Nuraeni and Sugandi (2017) support this by stating that Journalism students use social media as an initial idea or topic in their news searches, which is applied across various fields, including news assignments.

Leaver, Highfield, and Abidin (2020) explain that Instagram has become a visual culture hub where users not only share personal stories but also circulate information that can serve as public references, including news content. Yang (2021) elaborates on research methodologies in the Instagram context, suggesting its rich potential as a source of data, interpretation, and media discourse for academic purposes, including journalism. Zappavigna (2016) points out that Instagram photography plays a role in constructing subjectivity, which is highly relevant for Journalism students analyzing narratives and representations within visual content. Hu, Manikonda, and Kambhampati (2014) also analyze Instagram content and user types, underlining the platform's capacity to convey diverse information forms.

The growing importance of social media in journalism is not only a technological but also a cultural shift. Abadi (2019) asserts that the

internet has rapidly developed without regard to space and time, influencing many people and making information more accessible. How news is now disseminated online via social media platforms, including Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and TikTok. Hochman and Manovich (2013) examined the localization and visual mapping of cities through Instagram content, suggesting the platform's ability to reflect and document real-time events and localized issues. Larsson (2018) found that users often engage with media organizations through Instagram, suggesting a shift in how news is consumed and interacted with by younger audiences, such as students. Koay et al. (2021) also support this by identifying Instagram as a key space for digital engagement and behavioral influence.

The evolving role of Instagram has implications in educational and social contexts. Emphasize that learning resources are not solely derived from textbooks but are also obtained through interaction and communication via social media. Rahayu et al. (2021) highlight how digital media is utilized by women not only for information but also for lifestyle-related social interactions. Carpenter et al. (2020) find that educators use Instagram for professional and educational purposes, making it a legitimate space for learning. Highlight the platform's power in digital network marketing, extending its utility to educational settings. Coelho, Oliveira, and Almeida (2016) add that content types on Instagram generate different engagement levels, influencing Journalism students' perception of relevance and credibility.

Issues of credibility and ethics also emerge in the context of using Instagram as a reference. Notes that while Journalism students use Instagram for speed in acquiring current information, content must still be verified. Affirm Instagram's popularity for distributing journalistic information. Attributes the rise in social media use to developments in information technology and changing media consumption habits. Underlines Instagram's

popularity among Generation Z, who prefer it over other platforms.

Highlight the benefits and drawbacks of using Instagram in news contexts, including reach and immediacy versus concerns of misinformation. Pittman and Reich (2016) state that Instagram evokes more emotional engagement than Twitter, enhancing its power in storytelling, a core skill in journalism. Gibbs et al. (2015) show that even sensitive topics like funerals are represented on Instagram, indicating its relevance in portraying social realities.

From a business and communication perspective, Ahmadinejad and Asli (2017) and Latiff and Safiee (2015) show that Instagram is also effective for e-business and branding strategies, which indirectly relates to how Journalism students perceive media utility. Arora et al. (2019) measure social media influencer impact, highlighting Instagram's strength in shaping opinions a factor Journalism students must critically evaluate.

Journalism education itself increasingly acknowledges the role of social media. Claassen (2001), Drok (2013), and Goyanes and Serra (2016) explore training and entrepreneurial motivation for Journalism students. Hanusch and Mellado (2014), and Hanusch et al. (2015) investigate students' professional views, while Williams et al. (2018) and Milojević et al. (2016) study identity formation and future outlooks. O'Donnell (2006), Hanna and Sanders (2007), and Nygren and Stigbrand (2014) analyze changes in Journalism student demographics and expectations.

Hoffman (2015), Fung et al. (2019), and Ripatti-Torniainen and Mikkola (2023) evaluate media and health communication on platforms like Instagram and explore how journalism students engage with knowledge. Wien (2000) emphasize the importance of information retrieval training in journalism education. Rojano et al. (2014) also highlight skills and attitudes relevant to media use in journalistic education. Zagidullina et al. (2023) examine how journalism is defined in academic

resources supporting the need for students to be critical in their reference choices.

Finally, Rahmayani et al. (2022) show Instagram's role in influencing student behavior through commercial accounts, emphasizing the platform's widespread effect.

The reason the researcher chose this title is that many individuals, including Journalism students, utilize Instagram as a reference or news source in their daily lives, relying on trustworthy accounts. Instagram is also highly popular among Journalism students, with many of them having accounts on the platform.

Based on the above exposition, the research question for this study is, "How is the pattern of utilizing social media Instagram as a news reference for Journalism students?" Given the scarcity of similar research conducted in Indonesia, particularly from the perspective of Journalism students, this study is of significant importance.

## **METHODS**

This study employs a qualitative method with two data collection techniques: questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire was created using Google Forms, containing questions to be presented to the informants. Interviews were conducted via WhatsApp messages in the form of voice notes. The use of questionnaires and interviews was chosen for their efficiency in obtaining responses from Journalism students. The questionnaire was distributed to Journalism students at UIN Jakarta to gather relevant answers, considering their experience in writing and publishing news.

Data collection tools through the questionnaire:

1. Are you a user of the social media platform Instagram?
2. Have you ever written news?
3. Does Instagram meet your information needs?
4. Do you often obtain information through Instagram?
5. Have you ever disseminated information obtained from Instagram?

6. Are the news references you write sourced from Instagram?
7. Can Instagram be used as a reference in news writing?
8. Do you receive information from major accounts on Instagram?
9. Is the information available on Instagram guaranteed to be valid?
10. Does Instagram provide up-to-date information?
11. Does Instagram meet your information needs?

Data collection tools through interviews:

1. On the social media platform Instagram, which is used as a reference, is there any interaction and communication?
2. As a user of social media Instagram, do you consider Instagram as a news reference or a lifestyle reference?
3. Why is information on Instagram sometimes not valid or considered hoax?
4. How much information on Instagram can be used as a news reference?

With this approach, the study aims to collect comprehensive and in-depth data regarding the utilization of Instagram as a news reference source for Journalism students.

## **RESULTS DAN DISCUSSIONS**

**B**ased on the questionnaire, it appears as the table below:

**Table 1.** The Results of Questionnaires

Question	Number of Respondents	Answer Indicators			
		SA	A	D	SD
1. Are you a user of the social media platform Instagram?	10	✓			

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2. Have you ever written news?	✓	ce in news writing ?	
3. Does Instagram meet your information needs?	✓	8. Do you receive information from major accounts on Instagram?	✓
4. Do you often obtain information through Instagram?	✓	9. Is the information available on Instagram guaranteed to be valid?	✓
5. Have you ever disseminated information obtained from Instagram?	✓	10. Does Instagram provide up-to-date information?	✓
6. Are the news references you write sourced from Instagram?	✓	11. Does Instagram meet your information needs?	✓
7. Can Instagram be used as a referen	✓	<hr/> <p>In the study on Instagram as a News Reference for Journalism Students, a questionnaire was distributed via Google Forms, and interviews were conducted through voice notes on the WhatsApp application with all second and fourth-semester Journalism students at Syarif</p>	

Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta. A total of 10 respondents filled out the Google Form, predominantly consisting of second-semester Journalism students.

The Instagram application is a photo and video sharing platform that can serve as a medium for information. Therefore, Instagram is an effective medium for disseminating information to the public. It can be accessed 24/7 via the internet, and news presented in the form of images or videos provides users with greater assurance that the information is accurate and trustworthy. Images and videos are more impactful and easier to remember than written text, allowing Journalism students to utilize Instagram as a news reference.

Results of the Questionnaire:

- Use of Instagram: Out of 10 respondents, 10 individuals (100%) strongly agree that Journalism students use the Instagram application.
- Experience in Writing News: On average, Journalism students have written news, as evidenced by 9 out of 10 respondents (90%) strongly agreeing in the questionnaire.
- Information Needs: There are 2 out of 10 respondents (20%) who disagree that Instagram meets their information needs, while 8 out of 10 respondents (80%) strongly agree that Instagram fulfills their information requirements.
- Source of News: Many Journalism students often obtain news or information through Instagram, as indicated by 8 respondents (80%) who agree.
- Dissemination of Information: A total of 9 out of 10 respondents (90%) agree that they have shared information obtained from Instagram.
- News References: Among the 10 respondents, 5 individuals (50%) agree and 5 individuals (50%) disagree that the news references they write are sourced from Instagram. However, they agree that the information available on Instagram can be used as a reference for news writing, usually obtained from major Instagram accounts that are more reliable.

- Validity of Information: Considering the presence of fake news or hoaxes, 8 out of 10 respondents (80%) disagree that the information on Instagram is guaranteed to be valid.
- Up-to-Date Information: Instagram is one of the social media platforms with a large number of active users, leading to 9 respondents (90%) strongly agreeing that the Instagram application provides up-to-date information.
- Suitability of Information Needs: Finally, 8 out of 10 respondents (80%) agree that Instagram meets their information needs.

With these structured results, the data analysis is expected to be easier for readers to follow. Presenting the data in tabular form will also help clarify the interpretation of the research findings. Consistency in data presentation and interpretation is a primary concern to ensure a clear understanding of the utilization of Instagram as a news reference source for Journalism students.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research findings, the researcher concludes that Journalism students significantly utilize the social media platform Instagram as a reference for the news they create, as Instagram is very easy to use and always up-to-date in disseminating information. According to (Tukino, 2020), information is data that is processed into something of higher value for the recipient to assist in making a decision. Journalism students not only obtain information through Instagram but also share and disseminate the news they receive. Thus, the information obtained can be used as a reference in writing news. This indicates that Journalism students and social media are very difficult to separate. In fact, many Journalism students choose to use social media as a reference source for finding news.

The practical implications of this research finding indicate that using Instagram as a source of information can enhance Journalism students' ability to write relevant and current news. By utilizing this platform, students not

only become consumers of information but also play an active role in disseminating news. Therefore, it is important for educational institutions to provide training and guidance on the proper ways to use social media as a tool for seeking and disseminating accurate information.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I gratefully acknowledge the support and guidance of everyone who contributed to this research, especially thankful to my supervisor for their valuable input, and to all respondents who participated in this study.

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