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THE USE OF INSTAGRAM @INFO_BEASISWA AS A MEDIUM FOR FULFILLING SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION NEEDS: A MEDIA RICHNESS THEORY PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Scholarship information is detailed, time-sensitive, and closely related to educational decision-making; therefore, followers need digital media that can present information clearly, relevantly, and in a form that can be followed up. This study aims to analyze the use of the Instagram account @info_beasiswa as a medium for fulfilling scholarship information needs from the perspective of Media Richness Theory. This research used a descriptive quantitative approach involving 100 followers of @info_beasiswa selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through a four-point Likert-scale questionnaire consisting of 23 items and were supported by observation, documentation, and brief interviews with the account manager. The instrument was developed from four dimensions of Media Richness Theory: immediacy of feedback, multiple cues, language variety, and personal focus. Validity testing showed that all items were valid, with corrected item-total correlation values ranging from 0.490 to 0.829, and reliability testing produced a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.955. The findings indicate that all dimensions were in the very high category. Multiple cues obtained the highest grand mean score (3.53), followed by language variety (3.45), personal focus (3.39), and immediacy of feedback (3.31). These results show that @info_beasiswa primarily supports followers' information needs through varied content formats, visual elements, clear language, and relevant scholarship content, although rapid interpersonal feedback remains the least dominant dimension.

Keywords: information needs; Instagram; Media Richness Theory; scholarship information; social media; information behavior

INTRODUCTION

Information needs arise when individuals recognize a gap between what they already know and the information required to solve a problem, make a decision, or prepare for future action. In education, information is especially important because it helps students make decisions about learning opportunities, funding, and academic planning. Scholarship information is one of the most sought-after forms of educational information because scholarships can widen access to education and reduce financial barriers. However, scholarship information is often complex because it includes program names, eligibility requirements, benefits, deadlines, registration procedures, supporting documents, and follow-up links. Therefore, scholarship information must be presented accurately, clearly, and accessibly so that prospective applicants can use it effectively (UNESCO, 2023).

The growth of digital media has changed how students and the wider public seek information. Social media is now frequently used as a channel for distributing educational information because it is fast, visual, interactive, and easy to access. The high use of the internet and social media in Indonesia also makes social media a strategic space for information dissemination (DataReportal, 2026). Handayani et al. (2024) found that social media can function as a source of academic information for students, while Putriani et al. (2023) showed that social media use by educational institutions is related to the fulfillment of students' information needs. These studies indicate that

10 social media is not merely an entertainment platform but can also support information access in educational contexts.

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37 Instagram is one of the social media platforms that is widely used to present information visually. Its features, such as feed posts, stories, reels, carousel posts, captions, direct messages, comments, external links, and broadcast channels, allow information to be packaged in concise and attractive forms. These features are relevant for scholarship information because users often need to identify key points quickly before accessing more detailed official sources. In this context, Instagram accounts that specifically distribute scholarship information can become important information sources for students, graduates, and prospective applicants.

One Instagram account that actively distributes scholarship information is @info_beasiswa. Based on the researcher's observation, this account had more than 2.3 million followers in September 2025 and more than 2.4 million followers in April 2026. It also had more than 45,000 posts and used several Instagram features, including feed posts, reels, stories, Linktree, and a broadcast channel. The account carries the tagline "Beasiswa untuk Semua" and focuses on sharing scholarship information for students and the general public. These characteristics make @info_beasiswa relevant to be studied as an information source with a broad audience reach.

1 A large number of followers and posts, however, does not automatically mean that the information distributed through an account fulfills followers' needs. Scholarship information can be ambiguous if it is incomplete, too brief, or not supported by clear follow-up access. Fernando et al. (2020) explained that social media users often search for information to reduce uncertainty before making decisions. In the context of scholarships, incomplete or unclear information may lead to delayed registration, misunderstanding of requirements, or missed opportunities. Therefore, it is important to examine how the characteristics of Instagram as a medium support the process of obtaining, understanding, evaluating, and following up scholarship information.

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9 This study uses Media Richness Theory as the main analytical framework. Daft, Lengel, and Trevino (1987) explained that media differ in their ability to reduce ambiguity and support understanding. A richer medium can provide rapid feedback, multiple cues, varied language, and personal focus. These four dimensions are relevant for analyzing Instagram because the platform combines visual, textual, interactive, and personalized elements in one digital environment. In this study, Media Richness Theory is used to analyze how @info_beasiswa supports the fulfillment of followers' scholarship information needs through immediacy of feedback, multiple cues, language variety, and personal focus.

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27 Several previous studies support the relevance of this topic. Setyaningsih, Hakim, and Romli (2024) used Media Richness Theory to analyze Instagram as a communication medium in an Islamic philanthropy context. Xiao et al. (2021) showed that information quality and media richness influence users' experiences on social media. Putri, Rohman, and Prijana (2023) found a relationship between Instagram information quality and followers' information need fulfillment, while Cantika and Nabila (2025) showed that Instagram can support academic information needs in a university context. Nevertheless, studies that specifically analyze a popular scholarship information account through Media Richness Theory remain limited, especially in the context of Indonesian Instagram users. This study addresses that gap by examining @info_beasiswa as a digital information source in the field of library and information science.

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1 The research question is: how do the rich media characteristics of the Instagram account @info_beasiswa support the fulfillment of followers' scholarship information needs? This study aims to analyze the use of @info_beasiswa as a medium for fulfilling scholarship information needs based on the four dimensions of Media Richness Theory.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a descriptive quantitative approach. This approach was selected because the study aimed to describe followers' perceptions of the media richness characteristics of @info_beasiswa objectively and systematically, rather than to test causal relationships among variables. Descriptive quantitative research is appropriate when numerical data are used to present patterns, averages, and tendencies related to a particular phenomenon (Waruwu et al., 2025).

The population of this study consisted of all followers of the Instagram account @info_beasiswa. Based on the researcher's observation, the account had approximately 2.3 million followers in September 2025 and approximately 2.4 million followers in April 2026. Because the population was very large, the study involved 100 respondents. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a 10% margin of error, while respondent selection used purposive sampling (Makwana et al., 2023). Purposive sampling was chosen because the study required respondents who had direct experience with the object under study (Amin et al., 2023).

The respondent criteria were: (1) followers of the Instagram account @info_beasiswa and (2) followers who had communicated directly with the account through comments or direct messages. These criteria were used to ensure that the respondents had experience receiving scholarship information and interacting with the account. In addition to the questionnaire, data were supported by content observation, documentation of the account's features, and brief interviews with the account manager as supplementary information.

The research instrument was a questionnaire using a four-point Likert scale: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. A four-point scale was used to encourage respondents to indicate a clearer tendency without choosing a neutral response (Joshi et al., 2015). The questionnaire consisted of 23 items developed from four dimensions of Media Richness Theory: immediacy of feedback, multiple cues, language variety, and personal focus. The instrument is presented in Appendix A.

Validity testing was conducted using Pearson Product Moment correlation on 30 trial respondents. An item was considered valid when the calculated r value was greater than the r table value of 0.361 at a significance level of 0.05. Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha. An instrument is generally considered reliable when the alpha value meets or exceeds the acceptable threshold of 0.70 (Subhaktiyasa, 2024).

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency distribution, percentage, mean, and grand mean. The mean was used to identify the tendency of responses for each questionnaire item, while the grand mean was used to determine the overall score for each dimension. The interpretation used four categories: 1.00–1.75 very low, 1.76–2.50 low, 2.51–3.25 high, and 3.26–4.00 very high.

Table 1. Respondent demographic characteristics

Characteristic	Category	Frequency
Gender	Female	67
Gender	Male	33
Age	< 18 years	31
Age	18–25 years	62
Age	26–34 years	6
Age	> 34 years	1
Last education	Senior high school/vocational school	63

Last education	Diploma	1
Last education	Bachelor degree	27
Last education	Master degree	2
Last education	Other	7

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The demographic data show that the respondents were dominated by female followers, with 67 female respondents and 33 male respondents. In terms of age, most respondents were between 18 and 25 years old, with 62 respondents, followed by 31 respondents under 18 years old. In terms of last education, most respondents were senior high school or vocational school graduates, with 63 respondents, followed by 27 respondents with a bachelor's degree. This composition indicates that the study mainly represents young users who are relevant to the target audience of scholarship information.

Before the main analysis was conducted, the questionnaire was tested for validity and reliability. The validity test showed that all 23 questionnaire items were valid because the calculated r values were higher than the r table value of 0.361. The corrected item-total correlation values ranged from 0.490 to 0.829. The reliability test produced a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.955, indicating very strong internal consistency. Therefore, the instrument was appropriate for measuring respondents' perceptions of media richness in the use of @info_beasiswa.

Table 2. Validity and reliability test summary

Test	Result	Interpretation
Validity	Corrected item-total correlation = 0.490–0.829; r table = 0.361	All 23 items were valid
Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha = 0.955; number of items = 23	Very strong internal consistency

The main analysis shows that all four dimensions of Media Richness Theory were in the very high category. The highest grand mean was obtained by multiple cues, followed by language variety, personal focus, and immediacy of feedback. These results indicate that followers perceived @info_beasiswa as a rich medium for presenting scholarship information, especially through the use of varied visual and textual cues.

Table 3. Grand mean of Media Richness dimensions

Dimension	Number of items	Grand mean	Category
Immediacy of feedback	5	3.31	Very high
Multiple cues	7	3.53	Very high
Language variety	5	3.45	Very high
Personal focus	6	3.39	Very high

Multiple cues

Multiple cues obtained the highest grand mean score, 3.53, and was categorized as very high. The strongest item in this dimension was the statement that scholarship information was presented through various content formats such as feed posts, stories, reels, and carousel posts, with a mean score of 3.66. This finding indicates that followers considered @info_beasiswa effective in using Instagram's multimodal features to deliver information.

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Observation also showed that the account presented information through digital posters, short videos, captions, icons, external links, and broadcast-channel messages. These elements help followers identify important information such as program names, benefits, requirements, deadlines, and access links. This finding is consistent with Media Richness Theory, which explains that media become richer when they can carry several cues at the same time (Daft et al., 1987). It also aligns with Kallio and Mäenpää (2025), who stated that visuality is a central affordance of Instagram, and with Mirawati et al. (2025), who emphasized cue diversity as an important element of media richness.

For scholarship information, multiple cues are important because followers often need to scan information quickly. A poster or carousel can highlight key points, a reel can attract attention through motion and sound, captions can provide short explanations, and Linktree can guide users to more complete information. Thus, the high score of multiple cues shows that the account's strongest contribution lies in the packaging of information through a combination of visual and textual cues.

Language variety

Language variety obtained a grand mean score of 3.45 and was also in the very high category. The highest item in this dimension was the statement that the language used by the account was communicative and suited to Instagram followers, with a mean score of 3.49. The result indicates that followers perceived the account's language as clear, concise, and easy to understand.

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Scholarship announcements often contain administrative terms, eligibility criteria, document requirements, and deadlines. When such information is presented using simple captions, bullet points, summaries, or emphasis through symbols and capital letters, users can understand it more quickly. In Media Richness Theory, language variety supports meaning-making because it allows communicators to adjust messages to context and audience needs (Daft et al., 1987). In this study, language variety helped bridge the gap between formal scholarship information and the practical needs of Instagram users.

The finding also supports the view that digital information needs are shaped by user context and media environments (Putri & Chigbundu, 2024). Followers may not always read official scholarship announcements first; instead, they may encounter simplified information on Instagram and then decide whether to access the official source. Therefore, language variety on @info_beasiswa serves not only as a writing style but also as part of an information service that supports comprehension.

Personal focus

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Personal focus obtained a grand mean score of 3.39 and was categorized as very high. The highest item in this dimension was the statement that the account's content motivated followers to follow up scholarship information, with a mean score of 3.61. This indicates that followers considered the information useful for their personal educational goals.

The personal focus of @info_beasiswa does not appear mainly through individual personalization. Instead, it is formed through relevance to the shared needs of its audience: students, graduates, and scholarship seekers. The account provides information for various educational levels, programs, and application contexts, so followers can find content that matches their situation. Moravec et al. (2025) explained that personalization in digital media is closely related to perceived relevance, trust, and user control. In this study, perceived relevance was reflected in followers' belief that the content was personally beneficial and worth following up.

This finding is also related to everyday information practices. Savolainen (2022) explained that information needs develop within dynamic everyday contexts, while Wang (2024) emphasized that

everyday information practices are shaped by continuous interaction with media. Followers of @info_beasiswa may not always search for a particular scholarship intentionally; repeated exposure to relevant posts can create awareness of new opportunities. This condition supports Chang and Chang's (2023) view that digital media exposure can shape users' attitudes and information needs.

Immediacy of feedback

6 Immediacy of feedback obtained a grand mean score of 3.31, which was still in the very high category but was the lowest among the four dimensions. Respondents generally agreed that they could clarify information through comments or direct messages and that responses from the account helped them understand scholarship information. However, the relatively lower score shows that rapid interpersonal feedback was not the strongest characteristic of the account.

In Media Richness Theory, feedback is important because it allows clarification and correction of meaning (Daft et al., 1987). Yu and Cai (2022) also showed that immediate feedback can support continuous engagement in online learning contexts. In the case of @info_beasiswa, Instagram provides spaces for feedback through comments, direct messages, reactions, and broadcast-channel interaction. However, the account's large number of followers and high volume of interaction may limit the ability of the administrator to respond quickly to every question.

This does not mean that the account fails to support information needs. Instead, it shows that @info_beasiswa functions more strongly as a curated and visual information provider than as a personal consultation channel. Followers can obtain initial information from posts, read brief explanations in captions, access follow-up links through Linktree, and use comments or direct messages for limited clarification. Therefore, immediacy of feedback remains important, but it is not the dominant source of media richness in this account.

Overall interpretation

Overall, the findings show that @info_beasiswa supports scholarship information needs through the combined strength of presentation, language, relevance, and interaction. Followers can obtain information from regular scholarship posts, understand the content through visual and textual simplification, evaluate the relevance of the information to their educational goals, and follow up through external links or Instagram interaction features.

7 These findings strengthen the view that Instagram can function as an information medium in the field of library and information science. The account does not replace official scholarship sources, but it helps users recognize opportunities and decide whether to seek more detailed information. In this sense, @info_beasiswa acts as an intermediary information source that connects users with more complete and official scholarship information. This role is important because information needs in digital environments involve not only access to information but also clarity, relevance, and actionability.

The findings also indicate practical implications for managers of educational information accounts. First, varied visual formats should be maintained because multiple cues were the account's strongest dimension. Second, language should remain concise, contextual, and user-oriented because it helps followers understand formal scholarship information. Third, feedback mechanisms can be improved through frequently asked questions, response templates, pinned comments, or clearer directions to official sources. These strategies can help balance the account's role as a large-scale information provider and a limited clarification channel.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Instagram account @info_beasiswa supports the fulfillment of followers' scholarship information needs through rich media characteristics. All four dimensions of Media Richness Theory were in the very high category: multiple cues scored 3.53, language variety scored 3.45, personal focus scored 3.39, and immediacy of feedback scored 3.31. These results show that the account is perceived as capable of presenting scholarship information that is varied, clear, relevant, understandable, and actionable.

The most prominent dimension was multiple cues. The account uses Instagram features and visual formats such as feed posts, reels, carousel posts, stories, digital posters, captions, Linktree, and a broadcast channel to present scholarship information. These features help followers identify key information and access further details. Language variety also supports information fulfillment because the account uses concise, communicative, and contextual language to simplify formal scholarship information.

Personal focus appears in the relevance of content to the general needs of scholarship seekers. Although the account does not provide individual-level personalization, followers still perceive the information as personally useful because it relates to their educational goals. Meanwhile, immediacy of feedback remains important but is not the account's strongest dimension. Comments and direct messages provide spaces for clarification, but the large number of followers and interactions may limit rapid responses.

In practical terms, @info_beasiswa is stronger as a visual, structured, and curated information provider than as a personal consultation medium. Future research may compare several scholarship information accounts, use qualitative methods to explore followers' experiences more deeply, or test the relationship between media richness and actual information-use behavior.

SUGGESTION

Based on the findings, the administrator of @info_beasiswa is advised to maintain the use of varied content formats because visual and textual cues are the account's strongest elements. The account can also improve the clarity of scholarship information by consistently including essential details such as program name, educational level, eligibility criteria, benefits, deadline, and official source link.

The account is also advised to strengthen feedback mechanisms. Because the number of followers is very large, not all questions can be answered individually. However, the account can provide pinned frequently asked questions, standard response templates, automatic reply directions, or highlight sections containing common scholarship questions. These steps can help followers obtain clarification more quickly while reducing repetitive questions to the administrator.

For followers, @info_beasiswa should be used as an initial information source. Followers are encouraged to verify each scholarship opportunity through the official source before applying. For future researchers, studies on scholarship information needs can be expanded by comparing multiple accounts, analyzing the accuracy of information, or examining how followers actually use the information after seeing posts on Instagram.

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APPENDIX A. RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The questionnaire used a four-point Likert scale: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. The items were developed from the four dimensions of Media Richness Theory.

Table 4. Questionnaire items

Dimension	Statement
Immediacy of feedback	I received feedback from the administrator of @info_beasiswa without waiting too long.
Immediacy of feedback	The administrator responded during the conversation, so I could immediately adjust my understanding.
Immediacy of feedback	Through @info_beasiswa, I could communicate directly in two directions with the administrator.
Immediacy of feedback	I could immediately clarify unclear information through comments or direct messages.
Immediacy of feedback	The administrator's response helped me understand scholarship information more quickly.
Multiple cues	@info_beasiswa delivered information using a combination of text and images.
Multiple cues	Scholarship information was presented through

	various content formats such as feed posts, stories, reels, or carousel posts.
Multiple cues	The content used visual elements such as icons, symbols, or infographics to support the message.
Multiple cues	Videos or animations were used to explain scholarship information.
Multiple cues	The visual layout, graphics, or design helped clarify the message.
Multiple cues	The combination of visual elements and text made the information easier for me to understand.
Multiple cues	The varied presentation of information helped me obtain more complete scholarship information.
Language variety	Information was presented in various textual forms, such as narration, bullet points, or summaries.
Language variety	The words, terms, or explanations used were appropriate to the context of scholarship information.
Language variety	Captions or messages used emphasis such as emojis, symbols, capital letters, or special marks to clarify meaning.
Language variety	The language used was communicative and suited to Instagram followers.
Language variety	The language style helped me understand scholarship information more quickly.
Personal focus	The information provided matched my needs as a follower.
Personal focus	The way the administrator delivered messages made me feel that the message was directed specifically to me.
Personal focus	The content presented by @info_beasiswa matched the situation I was experiencing.
Personal focus	The narration and language style made the message feel more personal.
Personal focus	The information provided was personally useful to me.
Personal focus	The account's content motivated me to follow up scholarship information.