

## 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 time-sensitive, detailed, and closely related to educational decision-making, requiring digital media that can present information clearly, relevantly, and accessibly. This study analyzes the Instagram account @info\_beasiswa as a medium for fulfilling scholarship information needs from the perspective of Media Richness Theory. The novelty of this study lies in applying Media Richness Theory to a popular Instagram account specifically dedicated to scholarship information in the context of educational information needs. This research employed a descriptive quantitative approach involving 100 followers selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a four-point Likert-scale questionnaire consisting of 23 items and were supported by observation, documentation, and brief interviews with the account manager. The analysis focused on four dimensions: immediacy of feedback, multiple cues, language variety, and personal focus. The findings show that all dimensions were in the very high category, with multiple cues obtaining 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 indicate that @info\_beasiswa mainly supports followers' information needs through varied content formats, visual presentation, clear language, and relevant scholarship content, although rapid interpersonal feedback remains the least dominant dimension. This study contributes to library and information science by showing how Instagram can function as an intermediary information source for recognizing, understanding, and following up scholarship opportunities.

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

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.

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.

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.

Several previous studies have examined the role of Instagram and social media in information dissemination. Setyaningsih, Hakim, and Romli (2024) used Media Richness Theory to analyze Instagram as a communication medium in the context of Islamic philanthropy. Xiao et al. (2021) examined the relationship between information quality, media richness, and social media fatigue, while Putri, Rohman, and Prijana (2023) analyzed the relationship between Instagram information quality and followers' information need fulfillment. Cantika and Nabila (2025) also showed that Instagram can support academic information needs in a university context. These studies confirm that Instagram and social media can support information access and communication. However, most of them focus on institutional communication, general academic information, entertainment-related information, or user experience, rather than Instagram accounts that specifically provide scholarship information.

This study differs from previous studies in three main aspects. First, this study focuses on @info\_besiswa, a popular Instagram account specifically dedicated to scholarship information, which contains detailed, time-sensitive, and decision-oriented educational information. Second, this study views followers not only as passive receivers of information, but also as users who seek, understand, evaluate, and follow up scholarship information before making educational decisions. Third, this study applies Media Richness Theory to analyze how Instagram features, such as feed posts, reels, stories, captions, comments, direct messages, external links, and broadcast channels, support the fulfillment of scholarship information needs.

Therefore, this study addresses the gap by examining @info\_besiswa as a digital information source in the field of library and information science. The study contributes to this field by showing how Instagram can function as an intermediary information source that helps users recognize scholarship opportunities, reduce uncertainty, understand essential requirements, and access further official information. By using the four dimensions of Media Richness Theory, this study provides a more specific explanation of how media richness supports information-seeking behavior and the fulfillment of educational information needs in the context of scholarship information.

The research question is: how do the rich media characteristics of the Instagram account @info\_besiswa support the fulfillment of followers' scholarship information needs? This study aims to analyze the use of @info\_besiswa 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\_besiswa 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\_besiswa. 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 and not all followers could be reached directly, this study involved 100 respondents. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a 10% margin of error. The use of a 10% margin of error was considered appropriate because this

study was descriptive in nature, did not aim to test causal relationships, and focused on identifying the general tendency of followers' perceptions rather than making precise statistical generalizations to the entire population. In this context, the Slovin formula was used as a practical guideline for determining the minimum number of respondents from a very large population under limited time and accessibility conditions.

Respondent selection was conducted using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling was chosen because the study required respondents who had direct experience with the object under study (Amin et al., 2023). This sampling technique is also appropriate when participants are selected based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives (Makwana 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 respondents had experience not only in receiving scholarship information but also in interacting with the account. The criteria were verified through screening questions placed at the beginning of the online questionnaire. Respondents were asked to confirm whether they followed @info\_beasiswa and whether they had ever communicated with the account through comments or direct messages. Only responses from participants who met both criteria were included in the analysis.

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.

In addition to the questionnaire as the main source of quantitative data, this study also used observation, documentation, and brief interviews with the account manager as supplementary data. Observation was conducted to identify the account's content formats, visual presentation, Instagram features, and interaction patterns. Documentation was used to record supporting evidence, including profile information, number of followers, content examples, Linktree, and broadcast channel features. Brief interviews with the account manager were used to obtain contextual information about the account's background, content management, and information dissemination practices. These supplementary data were not calculated statistically, but were used to support the interpretation of questionnaire results and to provide a more systematic explanation of how @info\_beasiswa presents scholarship information.

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.

The analysis procedure was conducted in two stages. First, questionnaire data were scored and analyzed quantitatively to determine the level of each Media Richness Theory

dimension. Second, the quantitative findings were interpreted by referring to observation, documentation, and interview data. This procedure was used so that the numerical results could be explained in relation to the actual features, content practices, and interaction patterns of the @info\_basiswa account.

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\_basiswa.

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\_basiswa 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\_besiswa effective in using Instagram's multimodal features to deliver information.

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.

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\_besiswa serves not only as a writing style but also as part of an information service that supports comprehension.

### *Personal focus*

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\_basiswa 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\_basiswa 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*

Immediacy of feedback obtained a grand mean score of 3.31, which was categorized as very high but was the lowest score among the four dimensions of Media Richness Theory. This result indicates that followers generally perceived @info\_basiswa as providing space for clarification through comments, direct messages, reactions, and other Instagram interaction features. However, compared with multiple cues, language variety, and personal focus, rapid interpersonal feedback was not the most dominant characteristic of the account.

In Media Richness Theory, feedback is an important element because it enables users to clarify messages, correct misunderstanding, and reduce ambiguity in communication (Daft et al., 1987). Immediate feedback also supports continuous engagement because users can receive responses that help them adjust their understanding during or after the communication process (Yu & Cai, 2022). In the context of scholarship information, this dimension is important because followers may need clarification about deadlines, eligibility requirements, registration procedures, required documents, or official sources before deciding to apply.

The relatively lower score of immediacy of feedback can be understood from the scale and function of the @info\_basiswa account. As a popular scholarship information account with millions of followers and a high number of posts, @info\_basiswa receives a large potential volume of interaction from users. This condition may limit the administrator's ability to respond quickly and personally to every comment or direct message. In other words, the larger the audience reach of the account, the more difficult it becomes to maintain fast one-to-one communication with each follower. This shows that the account's media richness is stronger in content delivery than in direct interpersonal interaction.

This limitation has important implications for the fulfillment of scholarship information needs. Scholarship information is often time-sensitive and requires accuracy. When followers do not receive quick clarification, they may experience uncertainty in interpreting

requirements, deadlines, or application procedures. Delayed feedback may also lead followers to rely more on captions, visual posts, Linktree, broadcast-channel messages, or official external sources rather than direct responses from the administrator. Therefore, although @info\_basiswa supports information needs through accessible and structured content, its ability to fulfill urgent clarification needs remains limited.

Nevertheless, the lower score of immediacy of feedback does not mean that the account fails to fulfill followers' information needs. Rather, it shows that @info\_basiswa functions more strongly as a curated, visual, and large-scale information provider than as a personal consultation channel. Followers can still obtain initial scholarship information from posts, understand key points through captions and visual layouts, access further information through external links, and use comments or direct messages for limited clarification. Thus, immediacy of feedback remains an important dimension, but it is not the main source of media richness in this account.

This finding also suggests that educational information accounts with large audiences need to strengthen their feedback mechanisms. The account manager may provide frequently asked questions, pinned comments, automatic reply directions, response templates, or clearer links to official scholarship sources. These strategies can help reduce repetitive questions and support followers who need quick clarification. Therefore, improving feedback management is important to balance the account's role as a broad information distributor and as a medium that helps followers reduce uncertainty in scholarship-related decision-making.

#### *Overall interpretation*

Overall, the findings show that @info\_basiswa 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.

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\_basiswa 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. The account can help followers recognize scholarship opportunities, understand essential information, and access further details through external links or official sources. Therefore, @info\_beasiswa can be understood as an intermediary information source that supports educational information needs, although it should not replace official scholarship sources.

This study has several limitations. First, the study involved 100 respondents, so the findings represent the perceptions of selected followers and cannot fully represent all followers of @info\_beasiswa. Second, this study used a descriptive quantitative approach, so the analysis was limited to describing the level of media richness based on followers' perceptions and did not test causal relationships among variables. Third, this study did not examine the relationship between media richness and followers' actual behavior in following up scholarship information, such as visiting official websites, preparing documents, or submitting scholarship applications. Therefore, 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\_besiswa 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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