

## The Influence of Using Instagram @Official USU Account on Image and Public Trust at Universitas Sumatera Utara Medan

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the effect of the use of the Instagram account @official.usu on the image and public trust at the University of North Sumatra in Medan City and to determine the level of influence between the use of the Instagram account @official.usu and the image and public trust at the University of North Sumatra in Medan City. This research method uses a quantitative approach and is carried out in Medan Baru District which consists of 6 Villages. The theories used are public relations theory, new media, image and trust. Indicators of Instagram use consist of Context, Communication, Collaboration, and Connection, indicators of image consist of Personality, Reputation, Value, and Corporate Identity, indicators of trust consist of Ability, Integrity, and Benevolence. Sampling was carried out using the Stratified Proportional Sampling and Cluster Random Sampling techniques with a sample size of 400 people. Data were collected through Google Forms which were distributed to respondents. The research data were analyzed using the single table method, cross table, Spearman Rank hypothesis test, and correlation coefficient analysis

## **INTRODUCTION**

The media acts as the main channel for conveying information to the public. By presenting accurate and transparent information, an entity can build public trust. When information is presented clearly and correctly, it can help improve credibility and a positive image (Purwo, 2020). The media is also the main means of communicating with the public. Through the media, an entity can convey important messages, explain its goals, values, and principles. Effective communication can create understanding and build trust. The media also plays a crucial role in managing information and mitigating negative impacts on image (Nila, 2012). By providing a quick, honest, and responsible response, the entity can gain public support and trust. The media also helps in shaping and managing an entity's reputation. Positive news, good reviews, and supportive content can help improve image, while proper handling of bad news can minimize negative impacts. Presenting testimonials and success stories through the media can be an effective tool for building trust. Real stories from people who are satisfied with a product or service can prove the value and quality of an entity.

Through media, an entity can actively participate in the community or industry in which they operate. This involvement can create a sense of trust and give the impression that the entity cares about the community and its environment (Khatimah, 2018). Overall, the media acts as a strong intermediary between an entity and its public. By using media wisely, transparently, and sustainably, an entity can build and enhance its trust and image in the eyes of the public. Media refers to the various means or tools used to convey information, messages, or content to a wide audience. The diversity of media reflects the development of technology and human communication needs. In the modern era, media has become an integral part of everyday life, shaping the way we understand the world, interact with information, and communicate with each other. Print media is a mass media whose messages or information are printed on sheets of paper. Print media includes newspapers, magazines, books, and brochures. Newspapers provide daily news and current information, while magazines focus more on in-depth content on specific topics. Books, as a longer form of print media, provide a platform for deeper and more scholarly narratives. Brochures are often used for promotional or brief informational purposes. Mass media combines various types of media to reach a large audience.

The combination of print, electronic, and digital media forms a mass media landscape that reaches millions of people worldwide (Khalid, 2019). Television and radio are forms of electronic media that have become an integral part of everyday life. Television presents audio-visual content through electronic signal-based broadcasts, while radio delivers audio content through radio waves. Podcasts, as a new form of electronic media, provide listeners with the flexibility to listen to a variety of topics whenever they want (Dreilinger, 2014). Visual media involves the use of visual elements such as photography, video, and animation. Photography depicts moments in images that can touch emotions or convey messages. Video adds an added dimension through movement and sound, while animation creates moving graphics or animated images. Audio recordings, podcasts, and radio broadcasts are forms of audio media that utilize

sound elements. Audio recordings can include music, narration, or sound effects. Podcasts, a form of recurring audio broadcast, provide a platform for discussions, interviews, or stories on a specific topic. Radio broadcasts provide a channel for listening to music, news, or entertainment programs in real time.

The development of technology has brought us into the era of digital media that includes websites, blogs, social media, and mobile applications. Websites provide an online platform for various information, services, or products. Blogs, often managed by individuals or groups, offer personal views or in-depth information. Social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, facilitate interaction and content sharing across the world. Mobile applications that can be downloaded and installed on mobile devices, bring access to various information and services to our fingertips (Farhan & Agustia, 2021). Over time, the media that is widely used or utilized is new media. New media refers to the development of communication technology that provides new forms and interactive capabilities in conveying information, entertainment, and messages to audiences. In an era where digital connectivity is at the heart of everyday life, new media plays a central role in shaping the way we interact with the world.

Social media is an integral part of new media that has changed the way we communicate, share information, and build relationships. Unlike traditional forms of media, social media facilitates two-way interaction, empowering users to be both producers and consumers of content (Gulo, 2023). Social media is an online platform that allows users to create, share, and interact with content. It includes websites and applications that allow users to engage in a variety of activities, such as posting statuses, sharing photos and videos, and communicating with other users. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, and TikTok are various types of social media that are widely used today. These social media offer two-way interactions that allow users to provide responses, likes, and share content. This creates high engagement, connecting people in ways that have never happened before. Social media has also changed the way we communicate, communication is no longer limited to a one-way environment, but rather an interactive dialogue. Messages can spread quickly and create broad conversations. Social media has a major impact on the formation of public opinion. Information and news can quickly go viral, influencing public views and opinions on a topic (Nababan & Ferdinandus, 2023).

Businesses and institutions also use social media as a powerful marketing tool. They build brands, communicate directly with customers, and create targeted advertising campaigns. Social media has been integrated into education to facilitate collaboration and online learning. This platform also provides a space for sharing knowledge and information. The most widely used social media today is Instagram. Instagram itself is one of the most popular social media platforms, and has become an effective means for educational institutions to strengthen their trust and image. With over one billion monthly active users, Instagram provides great potential for building relationships, sharing stories, and communicating visually. Instagram can be a strategic tool in increasing the trust and image of educational institutions (Falah & Setiawan, 2022).

Instagram allows educational institutions to visualize their identity through various visual content, such as photos and videos. Through a well-curated image gallery, institutions can present facilities, campus environments, and student activities, providing a clear picture of who they are. Uploading photos and stories about daily activities on campus helps humanize educational institutions. Involving employees, students, and community members in Instagram content creates an emotional closeness with the audience, increasing their trust in the institution. Instagram also provides educational institutions with a platform to share educational and informative content. Through short descriptions, video tutorials, or infographics, institutions can share knowledge, support their educational mission, and prove their expertise in various fields (Sikumbang, et al, 2024). It can facilitate two-way communication between educational institutions and their audiences. Through the comments and direct message features, institutions can answer questions, provide additional information, and respond to feedback, forming interactive and inclusive communication.

The use of the Stories and IGTV features allows educational institutions to share longer and more in-depth content. For example, institutions can create event recaps, Q&A sessions with faculty, or interviews with students, and provide a holistic picture of the experience at the institution. Instagram can be used to increase student engagement by inviting them to participate in creative content, such as photo contests, achievement announcements, or campus activity elections. This not only strengthens students' sense of ownership but also gives them positive recognition. Instagram provides an opportunity to build a strong online community. Through official hashtags, institutions can collect related content from users, uniting the online community around the values and identity of the educational institution. By consistently sharing academic achievements, awards, and recognition, Instagram helps to increase the reputation and recognition of the educational institution. This creates a positive impression among prospective students, parents, and potential partners.

The key to Instagram's success as a tool to improve the trust and image of educational institutions is continuity and consistency. Maintaining an account regularly, responding quickly, and presenting relevant content will strengthen the relationship with the audience (Falah & Setiawan, 2022). Instagram, in its entire social media ecosystem, offers educational institutions a dynamic stage to build trust and a positive image. By understanding their audience, adapting to visual content trends, and communicating core values, educational institutions can optimize Instagram's potential as a strategic tool in this digital era. The University of North Sumatra (USU), one of the leading universities in Indonesia, has utilized social media platforms, especially Instagram, as a means to improve its trust and image. In a diverse student population and impressive academic achievements, the University of North Sumatra has made Instagram a place to share inspirational stories, celebrate achievements, and interact directly with students, alumni, and the wider community.

Its official Instagram account, @official.usu, Universitas Sumatera Utara consistently presents visual content that reflects the identity and core values of the University. The photos and videos uploaded not only show academic life, but also other aspects such as extracurricular activities, community service, and interesting campus events. The Universitas Sumatera Utara Instagram account itself currently has 149 thousand followers, 90 followings, and 1,918 posts. The use of strong visuals helps Universitas Sumatera Utara visualize campus life, modern facilities, and innovative activities that support the learning process. The creativity used in capturing important moments, Universitas Sumatera Utara is able to show a positive and inclusive atmosphere on campus, which can provide confidence to prospective students and parents. Universitas Sumatera Utara also actively utilizes the Stories and IGTV features to provide more in-depth content. Through Q&A sessions, interviews with lecturers or outstanding students, and live coverage of campus events, they create high engagement and provide a comprehensive picture of University life.

In addition to educational content, Universitas Sumatera Utara uses Instagram as a channel to convey important information related to academic activities, registration procedures, and various campus announcements. This provides confidence that Universitas Sumatera Utara is a transparent institution that cares about the needs of students and other stakeholders. Direct interaction with followers is also a major focus of Universitas Sumatera Utara on Instagram. Universitas Sumatera Utara is also active in answering questions, giving appreciation to student achievements, and responding to feedback, the university creates a positive relationship with its community. Providing space for students and alumni to share their own experiences also helps build a sense of ownership and emotional connection. Consistent in presenting quality content, active interaction with the audience, and involvement in relevant issues, Universitas Sumatera Utara uses Instagram as a strategic tool to increase its trust and image. This platform is not only a place to share information, but also a means to form a positive narrative and strengthen ties with its community.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Research Paradigm**

A paradigm is a researcher's perspective in interpreting an event or incident or even a person's behavior. Researchers observe phenomena and symptoms that are certainly interesting to study. According to Wimmer and Dominick (in Kriyantono, 2016:19), a paradigm is a set of theories, procedures and assumptions that researchers believe in regarding how the researcher sees the world. Paradigms are formulated as a kind of mirror to see, understand, interpret society or social reality. All paradigms have characteristics that become theoretical and methodological foundations, including ontological dimensions related to assumptions about reality, epistemology or related to the relationship between researchers and those being studied, and methodology of how researchers gain knowledge. positivist paradigm is a paradigm that places social sciences, for example natural sciences where reality is placed as something real and out there and waiting to be discovered and as an organized method to

combine deductive logic with empirical observation in order to probabilistically find or obtain confirmation of cause and effect that can be used to predict general patterns of certain social symptoms (Neuman, 2013:71).

### **Instagram**

According to Atmoko (2012:3), Instagram is a photography-based social networking service. This social network was launched on October 6, 2010 by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger, which was able to attract 25 thousand users on the first day. In addition, Atmoko (2012:8), stated that the name Instagram is an abbreviation of the words "instant-telegram". According to the official Instagram website, Instagram is a fun and unique way to share your life with friends through a series of images. Take a photo with your cellphone or tablet and then choose a filter to change the image.

Based on the [blog.hootsuite.com](http://blog.hootsuite.com) article (Newberry, 2021), with more than one billion active users every month. 81% of Instagram users search for products and services through social media, 130 million Instagram users tap on Instagram shop, 50% of Instagram social media users make purchases after seeing products or services on Instagram. 500 million Instagram users use the stories feature every day and many others. This data shows that Instagram is a social media platform that can be used as a promotional media tool in an institution. Instagram variables are measured by the four Cs in the use of Instagram social media according to Chris Heuer in Solis (Hidayah, 2019: 4), namely:

- a. Context, explaining the meaning of a message through the use of language or the content of the message itself.
- b. Communication, explaining how information is packaged and shared with the aim of making users feel comfortable and the message can be conveyed properly, through the addition of images or messages.
- c. Collaboration, explaining the collaboration between an account or company and its users on social media to create good things to be more effective and efficient.

### **Image**

Image is a mental picture or idea produced by imagination or personality shown to the public by a person, organization, and so on. Image is a series of knowledge, experiences, feelings (emotions) and judgments organized in a human cognitive system or personal knowledge that is strongly believed to be true. According to Frank Jefkins, image is an impression, picture or impression that is right according to reality (real) regarding a policy, personnel, product, or services of an organization or company. Image does not only consist of a single reality held by individuals but also those who hold a series of interconnected images consisting of many elements or objects that are united and interpreted through language.

Complete information about image includes four elements (Harrison, 2007: 38), including the following:

- a. Personality  
The overall characteristics of the company understood by the target public such as a trustworthy company, a company that has social responsibility and so on.
- b. Reputation  
Reputation is something that the company has done and is believed by the target public based on their own experiences or other parties. Reputation is also the public's perception of past organizational actions and similar prospects or competitors.
- c. Value  
The values held by the company, in other words, corporate culture such as management attitudes that care about customers, employees who are responsive to requests and complaints.
- d. Corporate Identity  
Components that facilitate the recognition of the target public to the company such as logos, colors and slogans are the company's efforts to introduce itself to the public through visualization (logo or symbol) and non-visualization (the organization's reflection of its public in terms of behavior and communication).

### **Trust**

Trust is the foundation of a relationship. A relationship between two or more parties will occur if each party trusts each other. This trust cannot only be recognized by the other party, but must be built from the beginning and can be proven. In the world of economics, trust has been considered a catalyst in various transactions between sellers and buyers so that consumer satisfaction can be realized as expected (Yousafzai, 2003). According to Deutsch (in Yilmaz and Atalay, 2009), trust is an individual's behavior, who expects someone to provide positive benefits. Trust exists because the individual who is trusted can provide benefits and do what the individual who provides trust wants. Thus, trust is the basis for both parties to cooperate.

According to Mayer (in Ainurrofiq, 2007) there are three factors that form a person's trust in others, namely: a. Ability. Trust is a special realm, so individuals need confidence in how well someone shows their performance. Experience factors and proof of performance will underlie the emergence of other people's trust in individuals.

Kim (in Ainurrofiq, 2007) stated that ability includes competence, experience, institutional validation, and ability in science.

- a) Ability  
Trust is a special domain, so individuals need confidence in how well someone shows their performance. Experience factors and proof of performance will underlie the emergence of other people's trust in individuals. Kim (in Ainurrofiq, 2007) stated that ability includes competence, experience, institutional validation, and ability in science.

b) Integrity

Integrity is seen from the consistency between words and actions with a person's values. Honesty alone is not enough to explain integrity, but integrity requires steadfastness in accepting pressure. Kim (in Ainurrofiq, 2007) stated that integrity can be seen from the perspective of fairness, fulfillment, loyalty, honesty, dependability, and reliability.

c) Kindness

Kindness is related to intention. There is an interest in a person when interacting with others. This will lead him to think about that person and give the intention to trust or not with that person. According to Kim (in Ainurrofiq, 2007), benevolence includes attention, empathy, belief, and acceptance.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework is a stage where researchers can describe the design and strategy of the research to be carried out. The concept is interpreted as a generalization of a certain group of phenomena that can be used to describe various similar phenomena. In order for the concept to be studied empirically, it must be operationalized by changing it into a variable. The variables that will be used in this study are variable X which is the independent variable, namely the Use of the Instagram Account @official.usu, variable Y is the dependent variable, namely Image (Y1) and Trust (Y2) and variable Z which is an intermediate variable that already has its own indicators, namely the characteristics of respondents consisting of gender, age, sub-district, and education.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research is a quantitative research, using the correlational method, namely a method that aims to examine the relationship between variables (Rakhmat, 2012:62). The correlational method is used to be able to measure the relationship between various variables, predict dependent variables and make it easier to create experimental research views (Rakhmat, 2012:43).

### **Measurement Method (Variables/Concepts, Operational Definitions, Indicators and Scales)**

- **Variables**

#### **Independent Variable (X)**

The independent variable is the variable that causes or changes the dependent variable so that the independent variable can be said to be an influencing variable. The independent variable in this study is the use of the Instagram account @official.usu.

#### **Dependent Variable (Y)**

The dependent variable is a number of symptoms that appear influenced by the independent variable. The dependent variables in this study are image (Y1) and trust (Y2).

#### **Operational Definition**

Operational definition is a complete set of instructions to determine what is measured and how to measure variables so that researchers can determine whether the measurement is accurate or not (Abdullah, 2015: 175).

**Independent Variable (X) Use of Instagram Account @official.usu**

- **Context**  
The ability of the institution to form information that is interesting, clear and informative.
- **Communication**  
The ability of the institution to share and respond to messages.
- **Collaboration**  
The ability to work together with accounts or companies.
- **Connection**  
The ability to maintain relationships that have been built by doing something that is sustainable so that users feel closer to the institution.

**Dependent Variable (Y1) Image**

- **Personality**  
Personality and special characteristics of the institution.
- **Reputation**  
Reputation or good name of the institution.
- **Value**  
Value derived from the interaction of the institution with users.
- **Corporate**  
Identity Identity and identity of the institution.

## **Dependent Variable (Y2) Trust**

- **Ability**  
The ability of the institution which includes competence, experience, institutional approval, and ability in science.
- **Integrity**  
The ability of the institution which includes fairness, fulfillment, loyalty, candor, relevance and reliability.
- **Benevolence**  
The ability of the institution which includes attention, empathy, belief and acceptance.
- **Population, Sample and Sampling Technique**

### **Population**

Sugiyono (2016), said that population is a general area consisting of objects or subjects with certain qualities and characteristics determined by researchers to be studied and conclusions drawn. If someone wants to conduct research on all elements in the research area, then the research is population research. The population is limited to a number of groups or individuals who have at least one similar trait. The population in this study is the entire community that meets the criteria in Medan City. However, researchers limited it to using only one sub-district in Medan City, namely Medan Baru Sub-district. According to data published on the Central Statistics Agency website, the population in Medan Baru Sub-district is 36,598 people.

### **Sample**

Sample is a portion of the population that has certain characteristics or conditions to be studied which is selected using several procedures so that it is expected to represent the population (Martono, 2016: 269). To achieve good generalization, in addition to the procedure for drawing conclusions, the sample weight must also be considered and accounted for, thus the sample is a part or representative of the whole that will be studied (Arikunto, 2013: 174). In this study, the researcher used the Slovin formula (Sevilla et al., 1960: 182), so the result is 400 samples.

### **Sampling Technique**

The sampling technique in this study uses:

#### **1. Proportional Stratified Sampling**

Proportional Sampling is a sampling technique that aims to create homogeneous characteristics of a heterogeneous population grouped based on certain characteristics so that each group has relatively homogeneous sample members. This sample allows for the opportunity for a smaller population to still be selected as a sample (Kriyantono, 2008:79). In this technique, the population is grouped into groups or categories called strata. These strata can be age, gender, and so on. This sample aims to create homogeneous characteristics of a heterogeneous population grouped into subpopulations of certain characteristics so that each group (strata) has relatively homogeneous sample members. In this type of sampling, the number of samples taken from each stratum must be proportional. The sampling formula in this study is: (Arikunto, 2013:120).

Table 1. Sampling Formula

No	Kelurahan	Distribution and Sample
1	Titi Rantai	$\frac{7.450}{36.598} \times 400 = 81,42 \approx 82$
2	Padang Bulan	$\frac{6.317}{36.598} \times 400 = 69,04 \approx 69$
3	Merdeka	$\frac{7.033}{36.598} \times 400 = 76,86 \approx 77$
4	Darat	$\frac{2.039}{36.598} \times 400 = 22,28 \approx 22$
5	Babura	$\frac{7.602}{36.598} \times 400 = 83,08 \approx 83$
6	Petisah Hulu	$\frac{6.157}{36.598} \times 400 = 67,29 \approx 67$
	Jumlah	400

## 2. Cluster Random Sampling

Cluster Random Sampling is a sampling technique by dividing the population into sets (groups, clusters), then the set will be selected randomly and if a set has been selected, then all residents in the set will be used as samples in the study (Baro, 2016: 95). In this study, the Cluster Random Sampling method was used as a sampling technique, this is because the population is quite large.

Table 2. Sampling Technique

No	Kelurahan	Population	Sampel
1.	Titi Rantai	7.450	82
2.	Padang Bulan	6.317	69
3.	Merdeka	7.033	77
4.	Darat	2.039	22
5.	Babura	7.602	83
6.	Petisah Hulu	6.157	67
	Amount	36.598	400

### Data Collection Techniques

Data collection techniques are techniques or methods that researchers can use to collect data. Data collection in research, especially quantitative research, is not easy. This is because researchers are the main instrument in data collection. Data collection is done through:

Primary Data and Secondary Data

### Validity and Reliability Test

#### Validity Test

Is a test conducted to determine whether the questionnaire instrument used is suitable enough to be used so that it produces accurate data in accordance with the objectives. An instrument is said to be correct if it is able to measure what is desired and can capture the data of the variables studied accurately. Arifin (2011:23), said that validity is a degree of accuracy of the instrument (measuring tool), meaning that the instrument used is truly accurate in measuring what will be measured.

Ancok (in Singarimbun & Effendi, 2008:124-137) said that to test validity, there are several steps that must be taken: first, operationally defining the concept to be measured; second, conducting a trial of the measuring scale on a number of respondents; third, preparing a tabulation table of answers; fourth, calculating the correlation between each statement and the total score using the Product Moment correlation technique formula.

To determine whether an item/item contained in the questionnaire is valid or not, it is done by comparing  $r_{hitung}$  with  $r_{tabel}$ . Validity testing is carried out using SPSS statistical software.

## **Reliability Test**

A measuring instrument is said to be reliable if the measuring instrument consistently gives the same results or answers to the same symptoms, even though it is used repeatedly. According to Kriyantono (2008: 145), reliability means that the measuring instrument is stable (does not change), can be relied on (dependable), and remains (consistent). Furthermore, Arikunto (2006) stated that the reliability test refers to an understanding that an instrument is reliable enough to be used as a data collection tool because the instrument is good.

According to Arifin (2011:44) this technique is not only used for tests with two choices, but its application is wider such as testing attitude measurement scales with three, five or seven choices. In conducting this research, the researcher used the reliability of the cronbach alpha coefficient through the SPSS software tool.

## **Data Analysis Techniques**

### **Single Table Analysis**

Is an analysis conducted by dividing research variables into categories based on frequency. A single table is the initial step in analyzing data consisting of 2 columns, namely a number of frequencies and a percentage column for each category (in Singarimbun, 2008:266).

### **Cross Table Analysis**

A technique used to analyze and determine whether one variable has a relationship with another variable, so that it can be determined whether the variable is positive or negative (in Singarimbun, 2008: 273).

### **Hypothesis Testing**

Hypothesis testing is one of the functions to simplify data so that it is easy to read and present, and is also used to test hypotheses. Relationship analysis is an analysis that uses inferential statistical tests with the aim of seeing the degree of relationship between two variables. The strength of the relationship shows the degree of this relationship, called the association coefficient (correlation). In this study, the variables measured are on an ordinal scale. In accordance with the applicable guidelines for the use of statistical tests, ordinal-scale hypothesis testing can be carried out using the "Spearman's Rho Rank Order Correlations" statistical test with the help of the SPSS tool.

### **Correlation Coefficient Analysis**

Correlation coefficient analysis is intended to see the relationship of the measurement results of the variables studied, to determine the degree of relationship between variables x, y and z. To regulate the strength of the degree of relationship, the following correlation coefficient values are used (Kriyantono, 2008: 168-169), namely:

$\leq 0.20$  = very low correlation; very weak

0.20-0.39 = low but definite correlation

0.40-0.70 = quite significant correlation

0.71-0.90 = high correlation; strong

$\geq 0.90$  = very high correlation; very strong; reliable

## **RESULTS**

Cross-tab analysis is one of the techniques used to analyze and understand the relationship between variables. The purpose of this analysis is to determine whether there is a relationship between the variables, and if so, whether the relationship is positive or negative. However, this tabulation analysis should not be considered as the only determinant to see the relationship between the variables being studied. Cross-data analysis, or commonly referred to as cross tabs, aims to understand the relationship between variables in the study in more depth, which have previously been presented in the form of single data.

The cross-tab analysis in this chapter will contain the assessment and data in one table. In this cross-tab analysis process, not all combinations of variables X with Y1 and Y2 will be crossed and analyzed. The researcher will only display items that are considered important from each research variable (Variable X, Variable Y1, Variable Y2).

The variables that will be crossed are those that have a significant relationship or relevance to the research objectives. The variables that will be crossed are variable X, namely "Use of the Instagram Account @official.usu" with variable Y1, namely "Image of the University of North Sumatra" and variable Y2, namely "Public Trust in the University of North Sumatra". The variables that are crossed are:

1. The relationship between the question "How is Instagram @official.usu's ability to respond to messages (respond to comments or messages)" (variable X) with the question "How is Instagram @official.usu's ability to build value derived from interactions with Instagram users" (variable Y1).
2. The relationship between the question "How is Instagram @official.usu's ability to display informative content" (variable X) with the question "How is Instagram @official.usu's ability to increase trust in the level of USU information fulfillment" (variable Y2).

### **Hypothesis Testing**

After completing the analysis of single tables and cross tables, the researcher took the next step, namely testing the hypothesis. This hypothesis testing aims to determine whether the three hypotheses in this study are rejected or accepted. This hypothesis includes the independent variable (X), namely "Use of the Instagram Account @official.usu" with the dependent variable (Y1), namely "Image of the University of North Sumatra" and the dependent variable (Y2), namely "Public Trust in the University of North Sumatra".

The hypothesis testing process contains aspects that must be considered including the level of significance, correlation coefficient, and direction of the hypothesis. The researcher conducted a test of the level of relationship between the three variables by testing the hypothesis using the Spearman's Rho Rank-Order Correlation formula by Spearman using SPSS software version 23.

Based on the correlation results using the Spearman Correlation Coefficient formula,  $H_0$  is rejected if the significance is  $<0.05$ . From the table, it can be seen that the significant value of each of the three variables is 0.000, which means that the number is  $<0.05$ , so  $H_{01}$ ,  $H_{02}$ , and  $H_{03}$  are rejected and  $H_{a1}$ ,  $H_{a2}$

and Ha3 are accepted. The variable of Use of Instagram Account @official.usu with the Image of the University of North Sumatra has a correlation value of 0.398. The correlation value between the Use of Instagram Account @official.usu with Public Trust in the University of North Sumatra is 0.235. The last variable, namely the Use of Instagram Account @official.usu with the Image of the University of North Sumatra and Public Trust in the University of North Sumatra has a correlation value of 0.382. Next, to see the high and low correlation, the Guilford scale is used, as follows:

<0.20: Very low correlation

0.20 - 0.40: Low but definite correlation

0.41 - 0.70: Quite significant correlation

0.71 - 0.90: High correlation; strong

>0.91: Very high correlation; very strong

Based on the correlation results using the Spearman Correlation Coefficient formula in the table above, the following statements can be drawn:

- a. The magnitude of the correlation between the Use of the Instagram Account @official.usu and the Image of the University of North Sumatra is 0.398. This figure is in the range of 0.20 - 0.40 which indicates a low but definite correlation. In addition, the results of a positive correlation value indicate a unidirectional relationship. Based on the output above, the significance value is 0.000, meaning  $<0.05$ . The conclusion found that there is a significant or unidirectional relationship between the Use of the Instagram Account @official.usu and the Image of the University of North Sumatra with a low but definite correlation, thus it is known that Ho1 is rejected and Ha1 is accepted.
- b. The magnitude of the correlation between the Use of the Instagram Account @official.usu and Public Trust at the University of North Sumatra is 0.235. This figure is in the range of 0.20 - 0.40 which indicates a low but definite correlation. In addition, the results of the positive correlation value indicate a unidirectional relationship. Based on the output above, the significance value is 0.000 meaning  $<0.05$ . The conclusion found that there is a significant or unidirectional relationship between the Use of the Instagram Account @official.usu and Public Trust at the University of North Sumatra with a low but definite correlation, thus it is known that Ho2 is rejected and Ha2 is accepted.
- c. The magnitude of the correlation between the Use of the Instagram Account @official.usu and the Image and Public Trust at the University of North Sumatra is 0.382. Based on the Guilford scale, the figure is in the range of 0.20 - 0.40 which indicates a low but definite correlation. The significance value is also positive which means that there is a significant relationship between the Use of the Instagram Account @official.usu Against the Image and Public Trust at the University of North Sumatra with a low but definite correlation. Thus it is known that Ho3 is rejected and Ha3 is accepted.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **The Influence of Using the Instagram Account @official.usu on the Image of the University of North Sumatra in Medan City**

Instagram is a very popular platform with millions of active users every day. By having an active and well-managed Instagram account, institutions can increase their visibility in the public eye. Interesting and relevant content can reach a wider audience, including those who may not have known the institution before. Instagram allows two-way interaction between institutions and their followers. Through the comments, direct messages, and polling features, institutions can interact directly with users. This helps build closer and more personal relationships with the audience, thus creating a positive impression and strengthening the institution's image as a caring and open entity.

The influence of using the Instagram account @official.usu on the Image of the University of North Sumatra can be explained through the following aspects:

#### **1. Personality**

- Friendly and approachable, Instagram allows the University of North Sumatra to interact with its followers more personally and build closer relationships. This can increase followers' perceptions of the University of North Sumatra as a friendly and approachable institution.
- Modern and contemporary, the use of the Instagram platform which is popular among young people shows that the University of North Sumatra is following the times and is not out of date. This can improve the image of the University of North Sumatra as a modern and contemporary institution. The Instagram account @official.usu can help build and strengthen the personality of the University of North Sumatra in the eyes of the public. Through consistent content, the University of North Sumatra can convey the values, characteristics, and unique personalities that it wants to highlight. This can help create a positive and attractive perception of the University of North Sumatra as an educational institution.

#### **2. Reputation**

- Credibility and trust, informative and high-quality content shared on the Instagram account @official.usu can increase the credibility and public trust in the University of North Sumatra.
- Achievements and awards, the University of North Sumatra can use Instagram to promote its achievements and awards, thereby increasing its reputation as an excellent educational institution. Good Instagram account management can contribute to building the reputation of the University of North Sumatra. Content that is informative, credible, and responsive to stakeholders can help strengthen the reputation of the University of North Sumatra as a trusted university. An active presence on social media can also help USU respond to and manage reputation-related issues effectively.

### 3. Value

- Concern for students, content that shows the University of North Sumatra's concern for students. Such as information about scholarships, health services, and student activities, can improve the image of the University of North Sumatra as an institution that cares about its students.
- Commitment to the quality of education, content that shows the University of North Sumatra's commitment to the quality of education. Such as information about the latest curriculum, innovative learning methods, and lecturer achievements, can improve the image of the University of North Sumatra as an institution that is committed to providing high-quality education. Through the Instagram account @official.usu, the University of North Sumatra can communicate its values, vision, and mission. Content that describes the excellence, innovation, and contribution of the University of North Sumatra can help strengthen public perception of the value offered by the University. This can help increase the attractiveness of the University of North Sumatra to prospective students, partners, and other stakeholders.

### 4. Corporate Identity

- Strong visual identity, consistent use of logos, colors, and visual styles on the Instagram account @official.usu can strengthen the visual identity of the University of North Sumatra and increase brand recognition.
- Clear and consistent messages, the content delivered on the Instagram account @official.usu must have a clear and consistent message with the vision and mission of the University of North Sumatra, so that it can strengthen the corporate identity of the University of North Sumatra.

The Instagram account @official.usu can be used to strengthen the corporate identity of the University of North Sumatra. The use of consistent visual elements, such as logos, colors, and styles, can help build a strong and cohesive visual image. This can contribute to public recognition and recall of the University of North Sumatra as an educational institution that has a clear and strong identity. Based on the results of the study obtained, the use of the Instagram account @official.usu has an influence on the image of the University of North Sumatra.

This is supported by the results of previous studies which show that the variable of using the Instagram account @official.usu has a positive influence on the image of the University of North Sumatra, because researchers have conducted hypothesis testing by obtaining a significance value of  $0.000 < 0.005$ . Based on the results of these calculations, it can be concluded that the variable of using the Instagram account @official.usu has an effect on the image of the University of North Sumatra with a correlation of 0.398, which means a low but definite correlation.

The findings of this study are in line with the research of Isfa Kaharmudzakir and Mohamad Ichlas El Qudsi (2022) entitled "The Influence of Instagram Content @interstudioofficial and Student Opinion on the Image of InterStudi College". In the research of Isfa Kaharmudzakir et al., the results of the study showed that Instagram content and student opinions influenced the image of InterStudi college. The findings explain that Instagram content uploaded by the @interstudioofficial account must be positive so that followers will provide comments and opinions that ultimately have a good effect on InterStudi's image. Social media theory One form of the existence of New Media is the phenomenon of the emergence of social networks (social media). On social media, it turns out that social activities can not only be carried out in the real world (real) but also in cyberspace (unreal). Social media and the internet, which are advances in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), have fundamentally changed the face of media, from one-way communication (which only conveys news and information) to two-way interaction (where users can interact with information providers, or between users).

Social media has really changed the pattern of direct human communication which also has an impact on the pattern of human relationships between individuals. Social media or more often called social media can be accessed online on the internet network. The internet is the main requirement for every user (netizen, user, or netizen) to be able to enter or log in to the network. The most popular social media today is Instagram. Instagram is currently widely used by institutions as a means to increase public trust and image.

#### **The Influence of Using the @official.usu Instagram Account on Public Trust at the University of North Sumatra in Medan City**

Instagram allows institutions to communicate directly with their followers, share information about the activities, programs, and values of the institution. This creates the impression that the institution operates openly and transparently, which can increase public trust. Through visual design, language style, and the type of content posted, Instagram can help build a strong branding and identity for the institution. Consistency in posting and the use of distinctive visual elements can help create a cohesive and recognizable image among the institution's followers. Institutions can use Instagram to educate and provide information to their followers about their mission, values, programs, and activities.

Uploading about the institution's achievements, events, or initiatives can provide a better picture to the public about the contributions and positive impacts made by the institution. Positive and consistent activity on Instagram can help build a good reputation for the institution. By sharing success stories, testimonials, or experiences from users or partners, institutions can increase public trust in their credibility and integrity. Based on several studies and analyses, it can be concluded that the use of the Instagram account @official.usu has the potential to increase public trust in the University of North Sumatra, especially in building:

## 1. Ability

- Academic and Research Achievements, posts about academic achievements, awards won, and research results of lecturers and students can demonstrate the ability of the University of North Sumatra in providing high-quality education and significant contributions in the field of science.
- Teaching Quality and Facilities, displaying the quality of teaching through student and lecturer testimonials, as well as posting about modern and complete campus facilities, can strengthen public perception of the University of North Sumatra's ability to provide a superior learning environment.

Through informative, innovative, and quality content on the Instagram account @official.usu, the University of North Sumatra can demonstrate its abilities and competencies. Content that displays academic achievements, facilities, resources, and study program excellence can increase public perception of the University of North Sumatra's ability as an educational institution. This can contribute to public trust in USU's ability to provide a quality educational experience.

## 2. Integrity

- Transparency and Accountability, using an Instagram account to provide transparent information about policies, decisions, and the latest developments on campus demonstrates Universitas Sumatera Utara's commitment to openness and accountability. This includes providing information about the student admissions process, funding allocation, and resource management.
- Ethics and Moral Values, posting content that demonstrates Universitas Sumatera Utara's commitment to ethics, fairness, and moral values in every aspect of its operations can increase the perception of integrity. For example, informing about strict action against academic or ethical violations on campus.

Content that is consistent, transparent, and aligned with Universitas Sumatera Utara's values can help build public perception of the university's integrity. Quick responses and honest answers to questions or feedback from followers on Instagram can demonstrate Universitas Sumatera Utara's integrity in communicating. This can help increase public trust in Universitas Sumatera Utara as an institution that has principles and can be relied upon.

## 3. Benevolence

- Concern for Students, posting activities and programs that demonstrate Universitas Sumatera Utara's concern for student welfare. Such as scholarships, psychological assistance, and other welfare programs, can strengthen the perception that the University of North Sumatra cares about its students.
- Social Involvement, displaying community service activities and programs that support the local community and the wider community shows that the University of North Sumatra has a high concern for the community. This can include social service activities, environmental programs, and support for the local community.

Through the Instagram account @official.usu, the University of North Sumatra can show its commitment and concern for stakeholders, such as students, alumni, and the community. Content that displays social activities, community support, and initiatives that benefit the public can build perceptions about the goodness of the University of North Sumatra. This can encourage public trust that the University of North Sumatra has good intentions and strives to provide wider benefits.

Based on the research results obtained, the use of the Instagram account @official.usu has an influence on public trust in the University of North Sumatra in Medan City. This is supported by the results of previous studies which show that the variable of using the Instagram account @official.usu has a positive influence on public trust in Medan City, because researchers have conducted hypothesis testing by obtaining a significance value of  $0.000 < 0.005$ .

Based on the results of these calculations, it can be concluded that the variable of using the Instagram account @official.usu has an effect on public trust in the University of North Sumatra in Medan City with a correlation of 0.235, which means a low but definite correlation. The findings of this study are in line with Sri Perhatiningrum's (2020) research entitled "The Effectiveness of the Instagram Account @Aniesbaswedan in Increasing Public Trust". In Sri Perhatiningrum's research, the results showed that the most dominant dimension in this study was the Empathy dimension with a score of 4.26 and the Instagram account @Aniesbaswedan was declared effective based on the EPIC rate calculation of 4.05 in increasing public trust.

### **Correlation Between the Use of the @official.usu Instagram Account and the Image of the University of North Sumatra and Public Trust in Medan City**

The correlation between the use of Instagram accounts and public image and trust refers to the relationship or connection between how individuals, brands, or organizations use the Instagram platform with the perceptions formed by followers and the general public. The use of Instagram accounts includes activities such as uploading content (pictures, videos, stories), interacting with followers (through likes, comments, responding to questions), and using Instagram features such as Stories, IGTV, and live streaming. With the right strategy, this use can influence how others view them. Image refers to the picture or perception formed in people's minds of an individual, brand, or organization. This image can include attributes such as honesty, reliability, professionalism, and the extent to which they conform to the values valued by society.

Public trust, on the other hand, is the level of public belief or trust in the subject, which is greatly influenced by consistency, transparency, and positive interactions on social media such as Instagram. The correlation between Instagram account usage and public image and trust can be studied through various approaches, including surveys to measure public perception, data analysis to determine statistical relationships between variables involved, and case studies to understand the impact of strategies used by individuals, brands, or specific organizations.

The importance of understanding this correlation lies in its influence on public acceptance, assessment, support, and loyalty to the subject in question. For businesses or organizations, having a good image and high public trust can support success in carrying out their activities, such as increased sales, brand growth, and a strong reputation in the eyes of the public. Therefore, managing an Instagram account with a wise and consistent strategy can be an important factor in building and maintaining a positive image and increasing public trust. The use of the Instagram account @official.usu simultaneously has a low but definite correlation with the image of the University of North Sumatra and public trust in Medan City. This correlation can be analyzed through several key aspects, namely the ability of the account to build a positive image and increase public trust simultaneously. The following is an explanation of the correlation:

### **1. Increased Brand Awareness and Engagement**

- Correlation with Image, through consistent posts about campus activities, academic achievements, and student life, the Instagram account @official.usu helps increase public awareness of the University of North Sumatra. This builds a positive image of the university as an active and high-achieving institution.
- Correlation with Public Trust, the high level of interaction (likes, comments, shares) on the posted content shows that the public is interested and engaged with the information provided. This increases public trust because they feel closer and more aware of what is happening at the University of North Sumatra.

### **2. Transparency and Effective Communication**

- Correlation with Image, by presenting clear and transparent information about policies, events, and campus developments, the University of North Sumatra can form an image as an open and reliable institution.
- Correlation with Public Trust, effective and transparent communication through the Instagram account increases public trust, because they feel they are getting accurate information and can monitor the development of the university directly.

### **3. Promotion of University Values and Ethics**

- Correlation with Image, content that highlights the core values and ethics of Universitas Sumatera Utara, such as integrity, academic excellence, and social responsibility, helps strengthen the image of the University as an institution with high moral values.
- Correlation with Public Trust, the public is more likely to trust institutions that demonstrate a commitment to ethical values and social responsibility. By promoting social and environmental activities, Universitas Sumatera Utara can increase public trust in the integrity and concern of the University.

#### **4. Interaction and Feedback from the Public**

- Correlation with Image, through interactive features such as Q&A, polls, and comments, Universitas Sumatera Utara can show that they care about the input and needs of their students. This helps build an image as a responsive and caring institution.
- Correlation with Public Trust, the ability to respond and interact directly with the public through Instagram increases trust because they see that Universitas Sumatera Utara is open to feedback and is committed to **improving quality based on that input.**

#### **5. Delivery of Achievements and Innovations**

- Correlation with Image, by posting about academic achievements, research innovations, and excellent programs, Universitas Sumatera Utara can strengthen its image as an excellent and innovative institution.
- Correlation with Public Trust, the public tends to trust more in institutions that show real evidence of their capabilities and innovation.

Seeing achievements posted regularly increases public confidence in the capabilities and excellence of the University of North Sumatra. Based on the research results obtained, the use of the Instagram account @official.usu has an influence on the image and public trust at the University of North Sumatra in Medan City. This is supported by the results of previous studies which show that the variable of using the Instagram account @official.usu has a positive influence on the image and public trust at the University of North Sumatra in Medan City, because researchers have conducted hypothesis testing by obtaining a significance value of  $0.000 < 0.005$  but the correlation is low but certain which is indicated by the results of the correlation test of 0.382.

Based on the results of these calculations, it can be concluded that the variable of using the Instagram account @official.usu has an effect on the image and public trust at the University of North Sumatra in Medan City with a correlation of 0.382 which means a low but certain correlation. The findings of this study are in line with the research of Sri Perhatiningrum (2020) entitled "The Effectiveness of the Instagram Account @Aniesbaswedan in Increasing Public Trust". In Sri Perhatiningrum's research, the results of the study showed that the most dominant dimension in this study was the Empathy dimension with a score of 4.26 and the Instagram account @Aniesbaswedan was declared effective based on the EPIC rate calculation of 4.05 in increasing public trust.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that there is a relationship between the Use of the Instagram Account @official.usu on the Image and Public Trust in Medan City. The conclusions obtained in this study are summarized as follows:

1. The alternative hypothesis (Ha1) can be accepted while the null hypothesis (Ho1) is rejected, where there is an influence between the use of the Instagram account @official.usu and the image of the University of North Sumatra. The results of the study show that the Image Theory is still relevant to this context. The magnitude of the correlation value between the two variables shows a low but definite correlation (0.398).
2. The alternative hypothesis (Ha2) can be accepted while the null hypothesis (Ho2) is rejected, where there is an influence between the use of the Instagram account @official.usu and public trust in the University of North Sumatra. The results of the study show that the Trust Theory is still relevant to this context. The magnitude of the correlation value between the two variables shows a low but definite correlation (0.235).
3. The alternative hypothesis (Ha3) can be accepted while the null hypothesis (Ho3) is rejected, where there is a relationship between the use of the Instagram account @official.usu with the image and public trust in the University of North Sumatra. The results of the study indicate that the New Media Theory is still relevant to this context. The magnitude of the correlation value between the two variables shows a low but definite correlation (0.382).

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