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The Influence of the Use of Instagram Info Garut Media on the Trust of Garut University Students

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ABSTRACT: The rapid development of digital technology has transformed patterns of information access through visual-based platforms such as Instagram. Although Indonesia has approximately 191 million social media users, public trust in news distributed via social media remains relatively low, at only 39%. In this context, the @infogarut Instagram account has emerged as an important local information source for Garut University students, contributing 67.5% to their daily information needs. This study aims to examine the influence of @infogarut Instagram usage on students' trust in digital information. Using a descriptive quantitative approach, data were collected from 32 Garut University students through a closed-ended questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale, selected via purposive sampling. Instagram usage was measured through indicators of access intensity, feature utilization, and user interaction, while trust in digital information was operationalized through three dimensions: information ethics, transparency, and content objectivity. Data analysis involved validity and reliability testing followed by simple linear regression using SPSS. The results show that Instagram usage (mean score 3.70) and trust in digital information (mean score 4.11) are both categorized as good, and that increased frequency, duration of access, and interactive engagement with @infogarut content have a positive and significant effect on students' trust formation. These findings indicate that ethical information practices, transparency, and objective content management play a crucial role in enhancing public trust in local digital media. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on district-level digital media and in its substantive operationalization of trust indicators that are highly relevant to local public information governance.

Keywords: Media Instagram, Garut Info, Trust, Students

INTRODUCTION

The development of communication technology in the digital era has brought about fundamental changes in the way society accesses, produces, and disseminates information. The presence of the internet and social media has made communication processes rapid, interactive, and boundless across time and space. Social media, particularly Instagram, a visual-based platform, no longer

functions solely as a means of entertainment and social networking, but has evolved into a mass communication medium that plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and the level of public trust in the information they consume. Indonesia is one of the countries with a very high level of social media usage. The Digital Indonesia Report shows that the number of active social media users in Indonesia has reached 191 million people, or approximately 68.9% of the total population, with Instagram being one of the most widely used platforms, with over 109 million active users (Sunaryo, 2024) .

The rapid development of digital communication technology, particularly through social media platforms such as Instagram, has transformed information dissemination into a fast and interactive mass communication process, where trust in news media plays a crucial role in shaping patterns of media use, information selection, and public perception in digital environments (Strömbäck et al., 2025).

Based on data from the Reuters Institute Digital News Report Survey, it states that Indonesian people's trust in news on social media is only 39%, while trust in news from conventional media is still at 52%. This shows that the public still tends to be skeptical of news sourced from social media, including from journalists' personal accounts, because it is considered prone to bias, unverified, and too personal (Newman & Fletcher, 2023).

This phenomenon is also clearly visible in Garut Regency. As a digital native group, students rely on Instagram to obtain information on social and cultural issues as well as local government policies. One of the most influential local media accounts is @infogarut (formerly known as @infogarutid), which functions as a news channel, promotes community activities, and disseminates public information. The high level of posting activity and significant audience interaction indicate that Info Garut has become a primary source of information for the local public. A local study revealed that Info Garut contributed 67.5% to fulfilling the information needs of Garut University students, particularly regarding government issues and regional activities (Ardhita et al., 2025).

The focus of this research problem is to measure the influence of the use of social media Instagram Info Garut on the level of trust of students at Garut University. to the information presented by the account. This research is important because students are the most active group using social media and the most critical group in assessing the credibility of information. Thus, it is interesting to study whether the intensity of use, interaction, and perception of the Info Garut account have a significant influence on students' trust in the truth of the news presented.

Figure 1. Instagram Account Profile @InfoGarut, 2025

Source: Instagram.com/infogarut, 2025

Figure 1. shows the profile of the @InfoGarut account, one of the largest digital media outlets in Garut Regency, with 437,000 followers and over 17,000 posts. This account identifies itself as the first and largest digital media outlet in Greater Garut, focused on disseminating local information through the Instagram platform. This phenomenon reflects the change in the communication ecosystem of the Garut community, which now relies more on social media as the main source of public information. The existence of InfoGarut is a form of transformation of local journalism practices that adapt to the digital information consumption patterns of the community, especially the younger generation and students. Through fast, up-to-date, and interactive visual content, this account plays a role in building public awareness of various regional issues, ranging from social, cultural, political activities, to government policies. This condition shows that InfoGarut is not only an entertainment channel, but also functions as a media for forming public opinion at the local level.

Based on the explanation that has been explained, the theory of Mass Media Dependency Effects (Media System Dependency Theory) was developed by Melvin DeFleur and Sandra Ball-Rokeach (1976). This theory explains that a person's level of dependence on the media will determine the extent of the media's influence on the formation of attitudes, opinions, and behavior. In the context of this study, the more students depend on the Info Garut account to meet their information needs, the greater the influence of the account on their level of trust. In addition, the use of Info Garut Instagram in this study includes intensity of use, feature utilization, interaction with the audience, journalist personal branding, and ethics and accuracy of information as part of the media use variable (X). Meanwhile, the student trust variable (Y) includes the dimensions of credibility, reliability, honesty, objectivity, and transparency as indicators for assessing the quality of information sources (Nurlina et al., 2024).

In this study, the researchers used two variables: variable X (Instagram Usage) and variable Y (Audience Trust Level). Instagram functions as a news medium capable of influencing trust levels, with factors such as usage intensity, content format, and interaction being key aspects. This aligns with recent evidence showing that social media usage positively affects audience engagement and perceived credibility of news content, where greater interaction with news increases trust and credibility in digital media environments (Wahyu, 2024).

The use of the Info Garut Instagram account is defined as the extent to which students utilize the account as a source of information in their daily lives. This variable is operationalized through measurable aspects, including intensity of use (frequency and duration of access) and interaction with content (such as liking, commenting, and sharing information). Higher levels of access frequency and active interaction indicate greater reliance on the Info Garut account as an information source.

Student trust in the Info Garut Instagram account is defined as the extent to which students perceive the account as a reliable and credible source of digital information. This trust is measured through key dimensions of credibility, reliability, honesty, objectivity, and transparency, which reflect students' perceptions of the account's ethical conduct, consistency, and professionalism in presenting information relevant to public needs.

Research on the Influence of Instagram Use by Journalists on Audience Trust in Garut is relevant to previous research. First, previous research with the research title "The Influence of News Values and Media Credibility in the Instagram Account @Liputan6.Com on Fulfilling Followers' Information Needs". This previous research aims to analyze the influence of news values and media credibility on the Instagram account @Liputan6.com on fulfilling the information needs of its followers. The focus of this research is how news values and media credibility play a role in shaping audience perceptions in the digital era, where credibility includes the trustworthiness dimension. (trustworthy) and expertise. The results of this study found that news value and media credibility have a positive and significant influence on fulfilling followers' information needs. Credibility measured through accuracy, speed and fairness in presenting news is the main factor that determines followers' trust , and the higher the media credibility, the higher the level of information satisfaction felt. (Nomor & Halaman, 2025).

Second, previous research on "The Influence of Instagram as a Media for Covid 19 News on the Level of Student Trust (Case Study of Students at Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta)" this previous research discussed how much influence Instagram has as a media for news on the level of student trust. This study specifically examines how the use of the Instagram platform as a news source influences audience trust. The results of this study indicate that there is a significant influence between Instagram as a medium for COVID-19 news on students' level of trust. The influence found was 38.6%, which shows that the use of Instagram has a real role in shaping the audience's trust in the information received.

The novelty of this research lies in its specific examination of Instagram-based local media use and its influence on student trust, with local, district-level digital media as the unit of analysis. Previous studies on social media trust predominantly examined national or large-scale media outlets and conceptualized trust mainly through general credibility or cognitive–affective dimensions (e.g., perceived credibility and reliability), without explicitly incorporating ethical and normative aspects of information delivery. In contrast, this study advances prior research by operationalizing trust through information ethics, content objectivity, and transparency, dimensions that are particularly relevant to local public information contexts.

This novelty is implemented directly in the research instrument. Information ethics is measured through items assessing the accuracy of information, adherence to ethical standards, and responsibility in content dissemination (e.g., "The information shared by @infogarut is accurate and ethically presented"). Content objectivity is operationalized through indicators of balance, factual reporting, and neutrality (e.g., "@infogarut presents information in a balanced and unbiased manner"). Transparency is measured through indicators related to clarity of sources and openness of information (e.g., "@infogarut clearly states the sources of the information it publishes"). This explicit alignment between novelty, theoretical framing, and measurement distinguishes the present study from prior research and strengthens its methodological contribution.

The reason for choosing this topic is based on the increasing activity of Garut residents in accessing news through local social media. According to a 2023 APJII survey , 98.2 % of internet users aged 19–24 years old actively use social media every day, and the majority of them use Instagram as their main platform (Tremblay et al., 2016). This condition shows that social media has become an important part of students' information consumption patterns. Therefore, this study is relevant to determine the extent to which the use of the Info Garut account influences the trust of Garut University students in local information circulating on social media, therefore the researcher formulated the title: The Influence of the Use of Info Garut Instagram Media on the Trust of Garut University Students.

Based on the background description, the main problem that this study aims to answer is the extent to which the use of Info Garut Instagram media influences the trust of Garut University students as one of the most active social media user groups consuming digital information. To answer this question, this study is specifically directed at measuring and explaining how the dimensions of Instagram use starting from the intensity of use, feature utilization, to the level of interaction with the audience can influence various aspects of student trust in the information presented. In more detail, this study aims to assess the influence of the intensity of Info Garut Instagram use on the credibility and reliability of information received by students. In addition, this study also examines how the use of Instagram features, such as feeds, stories, reels, and other interactive features, contribute to shaping the credibility and reliability of information in the eyes of Garut University students. Furthermore, this study observes the extent to which student interaction with Info Garut content through the activities of liking, commenting, or sharing content influences their perceptions of the credibility and reliability of published information. Thus, this study is expected to be able to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between Info Garut Instagram usage patterns and the level of trust of students as a digital audience.

METHOD

Research Type

The research employs a descriptive method with a quantitative approach, which is commonly used to systematically describe, summarize, and interpret numerical data without manipulating the studied variables (Aziza, 2023) . In quantitative descriptive research, descriptive statistics play a central role in organizing data through measures such as frequencies, percentages, mean scores,

and standard deviations, enabling researchers to present empirical findings in a clear and interpretable manner (Siregar, 2022). This approach is appropriate for communication and social media studies, as it allows researchers to capture patterns of media use and audience perceptions based on survey data. Accordingly, this study aims to describe and analyze the influence of the use of the Instagram account Info Garut on the level of trust among Garut University students by quantitatively examining their responses and presenting the results through descriptive statistical analysis.

The research variables used in this study are grouped into two types, namely: (1) Influence variables (independent variables) are variables that are suspected to be the cause or predecessor of other variables. The independent variable (X) in this study is the use of Instagram Info Garut media, which includes several dimensions, namely intensity of use, utilization of Instagram features, and interaction with the audience. (2) Dependent variables (bound variables) are variables that are suspected to be the result or influenced by the variables that precede them. The dependent variable (Y) in this study is the level of student trust, which includes the dimensions of credibility, reliability, honesty, objectivity, and transparency of information.

The data collection in this study was conducted using a questionnaire, in which respondents directly filled in statements prepared by the researcher using the provided answer choices, serving as the primary source of data for the research findings. In addition, data were also collected through literature studies, which involved gathering relevant information from scientific books, journals, regulations, and other written sources, both printed and electronic (Daruhadi & Sopiati, 2024). Questionnaires are widely recognized as a structured method to obtain reliable and valid information from respondents, particularly in quantitative research (April et al., 2025). Meanwhile, literature studies provide a foundation for understanding theoretical frameworks and prior research, supporting the interpretation and contextualization of primary data (Maesaroh, 2025).

Population and Sample/Informants

The population in this study were students of Garut University who actively used Instagram social media and had accessed the Info Garut account. The research sample was determined using a purposive sampling technique, with the criteria being students who are active Instagram users and follow or consume information from the Info Garut account. The number of respondents in this study was 32 students.

Research Location

This research was conducted in Garut Regency, West Java, with a focus on Garut University students as research subjects. Garut Regency was chosen as the research location because it is one of the areas experiencing rapid development in the use of digital media, especially Instagram social media, as the main source of public information. The presence of local media accounts such as Instagram @InfoGarut has become an important part of the communication ecosystem of the

Garut community, especially among the younger generation and students. Garut University students were chosen as research respondents because they are a digital native group who actively use social media in their daily lives and have a relatively high level of media literacy. This condition makes students a relevant group to study the influence of the use of Instagram Info Garut media on the level of trust in the information presented. In addition, Garut University as a higher education institution located in the midst of the local community allows researchers to obtain a comprehensive picture of digital information consumption patterns and the dynamics of audience trust in local social media.

Instruments or Tools

The instrument used in this study was a closed-ended questionnaire developed based on indicators of Instagram Info Garut media usage and student trust levels. The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree to quantitatively measure respondents' perceptions.

The instrument consisted of two main variables:

1. Variable X (Use of Info Garut Instagram Media)
   Variable X is measured through three groups of indicators that capture the intensity, functional use, and interactive nature of Instagram usage:
   a) Intensity of use, measured through frequency of access, duration of use, consistency of usage time, and focus of attention on the content presented;
   b) Feature utilization, measured through the use of Instagram features as information sources, including feed posts, stories, and reels (e.g., accessing news via feeds, following updates through stories, and watching informational reels); and
   c) Interaction, measured through audience engagement behaviors such as liking, commenting on posts, sharing content, sending direct messages (DMs), and responding to or participating in discussions related to Info Garut content.

These indicators ensure that the measurement of Instagram usage reflects not only exposure and attention but also the functional and interactive dimensions of social media use.

2. Variable Y (Student Trust in Info Garut Instagram Media)

Variable Y is defined as the extent to which students perceive the Info Garut Instagram account as a credible and reliable source of information. Trust is measured through indicators of information ethics, content objectivity, and transparency, which reflect students' evaluations of accuracy, neutrality, openness, and ethical responsibility in the information presented.

Table 1. Operationalization of Variables.

Variable	Indicator	Sub-indicators	Measurement
Use of Instagram Media Info Garut (X)	Frequency	1. Intensity of opening the Info Garut account per day2. Frequency of viewing Info Garut uploads3. Frequency of access at different times (morning/afternoon/evening/night)	Likert Scale
	Duration	1. Length of time spent watching Info Garut videos/reels2. Willingness to allocate specific time to access content3. Completion in consuming content (watching/reading until finished)	Likert Scale
	Consistency of Time	1. Habit of accessing Info Garut at certain times2. Consistency in opening Info Garut even when busy3. Routine of accessing Info Garut on a daily basis	Likert Scale
	Focus of Attention	1. Level of focus when reading Info Garut posts2. Attention to important parts of the content3. Ability to absorb information effectively	Likert Scale
Level of Trust of Garut University Students (Y)	Cognitive	1. Students' knowledge of local information in Garut2. Clarity of information conveyed by Info Garut3. Increased understanding of regional issues through Info Garut	Likert Scale
	Affective	1. Interest in Info Garut content2. Positive attitude toward the way information is delivered3. Perceived importance of the information presented	Likert Scale
	Conative	1. Tendency to pay attention to Info Garut when important issues arise2. Motivation to follow local information developments3. Willingness to use Info Garut as a main information source	Likert Scale

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection is carried out in several stages. The initial stage is designing research instruments by compiling a questionnaire based on the theory and indicators of variables for the use of Instagram Info Garut media and the level of student trust. After the instrument was declared suitable, the questionnaire was distributed to 32 Garut University student respondents via the Google Forms platform. The questionnaire was distributed online via social media to facilitate access for respondents who actively use Instagram. Each respondent was given approximately 10–15 minutes to complete the questionnaire, and all data was collected automatically in digital form to be checked for completeness before being analyzed.

Data analysis

The data obtained were analyzed using simple linear regression analysis with the help of SPSS software. The analysis stage begins with a validity and reliability test. Next, a simple linear regression analysis is carried out using SPSS software to determine the effect of using the Info Garut Instagram media on students' level of trust. Regression analysis is used to see the direction and magnitude of the influence of independent variables on dependent variables.

The analysis results show a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.787, indicating a positive and strong relationship between the use of Instagram Info Garut media and the level of student trust. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.619 indicates that 61.9% of the variation in the level of student trust can be explained by the use of Instagram Info Garut media, while the rest is influenced by other factors outside the study. These findings confirm that the use of social media, especially Instagram as a local information medium, has an important role in shaping student trust in digital information.

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RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the researcher will explain the research results from the distribution of questionnaires conducted to Instagram media users . The results of this study explain the influence of the use of Instagram media Garut info on the cognitive, affective and conative attitudes of students' trust.

Recapitulation of Respondents' Responses to Instagram Usage Variables

Table 2 presents the results of the recapitulation of the analysis of respondents' response scores to the statement on the Instagram Usage variable which has 3 indicators (frequency, duration and consistent access time) and consists of 11 items as follows:

Table 2. Summary of Respondents' Responses to Instagram Usage Variables

No	Indicator / Statement	Average Score	Cumulative Total	Criteria
	Frequency			
1	I access the Info Garut Instagram account at least three times a day	3.46	9.22	Moderate
2	In one day, I view Info Garut posts more than once	3.68	8.67	Moderate
3	I open the Info Garut account in the morning, afternoon, evening, or night	3.37	9.48	Moderate
	Total Frequency Score	**3.51**	**9.13**	**Moderate**
	Duration			
4	I watch Info Garut videos or reels until the end	3.90	8.19	Good
5	I often set aside specific time to view Info Garut content	3.62	8.82	Moderate
	Total Duration Score	**3.77**	**8.51**	**Moderate**

	Access Time Consistency			
6	I have a habit of accessing Info Garut at certain times (morning/afternoon/evening/night)	3.56	8.98	Moderate
7	I consistently open Info Garut even when I am busy	3.18	10.03	Moderate
	Total Access Time Consistency Score	**3.37**	**9.51**	**Moderate**
	Focus of Attention			
8	I understand the content of Info Garut posts because I read them with focus	4.09	7.81	Good
9	I rarely miss important parts of Info Garut posts	3.75	8.53	Good
10	I can absorb information from Info Garut well	4.00	8.00	Good
	Total Focus of Attention Score	**3.95**	**8.12**	**Good**
	Overall Total and Average Score	**3.70**	**8.71**	**Good**

Based on Table 2, the summary of respondents' responses indicates that the use of the Instagram account @InfoGarut by Garut University students is in the moderate to good category. The variation in average scores indicates that the use of Instagram @InfoGarut is influenced by several indicators, namely

frequency of access, duration of use, consistency of access time, and respondent focus. Overall, the average score of the Instagram usage variable shows a fairly high level in shaping the attention of the student audience.

In the frequency indicator, respondents' assessments were in the moderate category. The highest average score of 3.68 was found in the statement "I see Info Garut posts more than once a day," which indicates that the content's chances of being seen by students are high. Meanwhile, the lowest score of 3.37 was found in the statement "I open the Info Garut account in the morning, afternoon, evening, and night," which was also in the moderate category. This indicates that respondents have a habit of accessing information from the InfoGarut account regularly, but the intensity of their access is still moderate. In the duration indicator, the highest average score of 3.90 with a good category was found in the statement "I watch Info Garut videos or reels until the end." These results indicate that the majority of respondents pay full attention to the audiovisual content presented. The statement "I often set aside special time to view Info Garut content" received an average score of 3.62 and is in the moderate category, indicating that although respondents have a fairly high level of attention, they do not always set aside special time to access the content.

Table 3. Description of Student Trust in the Info Garut Instagram Account

No	Indicator / Statement	Average Score	Cumulative Total	Criteria
	Cognitive			
1	I obtained information about the Garut area through uploads on the Info Garut account	4.25	7.53	Good
2	Info Garut content increases my knowledge of local issues in Garut Regency	4.16	7.70	Good
	Total Cognitive Score	**4.21**	**7.62**	**Good**
	Affective			
3	I feel that the information provided by Info Garut is important for me to know	4.09	7.82	Good
4	I like the way Info Garut delivers information on regional issues	4.16	7.70	Good
	Total Affective Score	**4.13**	**7.76**	**Good**
	Conative			
5	I pay attention to Info Garut uploads when important issues occur in Garut	4.03	7.94	Good
6	I am encouraged to keep up with local information developments through Info Garut	4.09	7.82	Good
7	I am willing to make Info Garut one of my main sources of information about Garut	3.91	8.19	Good
	Total Conative Score	**4.01**	**7.98**	**Good**
	Overall Total and Average Score	**4.11**	**7.79**	**Good**

In the attention focus indicator, the highest average score of 4.09 with a good category was found in the statement "I understand the contents of Info Garut posts because I read with focus." In addition, the statement "I feel I can absorb information from Info Garut well" obtained an average score of 4.00 which is also in the good category. This finding indicates that Garut University students as research respondents are able to receive and understand information conveyed through Instagram @InfoGarut with a high level of focus, so that the information presented can be absorbed optimally.

Recapitulation of Respondents' Responses to Student Trust Variables

Table 3 presents the results of the recapitulation of the analysis of respondents' response scores to the statement of the Student Trust variable which has 3 indicators (cognitive, affective and conative) and consists of 8 items as follows:

Table 3 shows that after going through the questionnaire distribution stage, the results of respondents' responses to the student trust variable statement achieved an average score of 4.11. Referring to the assessment criteria table, this value is included in the good category. This shows that respondents on average answered in agreement with the statements submitted in the research questionnaire relating to the trust variable. Thus, it can be concluded that the overall average score value for the student confidence variable given by respondents is in the good category.

These results mean that the trust of Garut University students towards the Info Garut Instagram account is relatively high. This trust is formed because the exposure to information received by students through the Info Garut account uploads is able to influence students' beliefs, knowledge, and perceptions (cognitive), influence students' feelings and attitudes towards the information presented (affective), and have an impact on students' tendencies to act and behave in accessing and making Info Garut a reference for local information (conative).

Judging from the cognitive indicators, the total average score was 4.12, which is in the good category. This can be interpreted as meaning that overall, the Garut University students who were respondents in this study gained knowledge about information about the Garut area through the Info Garut Instagram account. The information presented is able to influence students' beliefs and perceptions, so that exposure to Info Garut content has the effect of increasing understanding, increasing knowledge, and changing perceptions of local issues.

Furthermore, the affective indicator obtained an average score of 4.13, which, according to the assessment criteria table, falls into the Good category. This indicates that respondents overall had positive feelings about the content presented by the Info Garut account. The exposure to information received by students can influence their attitudes and feelings, so that students feel interested, like, and consider the information conveyed by Info Garut to be important to know.

The last indicator, namely conative, obtained an average score of 4.07 and based on the assessment criteria table, it is also in the good category. This shows that most respondents answered in agreement with the statements in the questionnaire, which means that exposure to information from the Info Garut Instagram account creates behavioral tendencies in students, such as paying attention to Info Garut uploads, following local information developments, and making Info Garut one of the main sources of information about Garut Regency.

Validity Test

Table 4. Results of the Validity Test of the Use of Instagram Media Info Garut(X)

Item Number	Correlation Coefficient (r)	t_{count}	t_{table}	Information
X1	0.723	3,138		Valid
X2	0.749	3,388		valid
X3	0.844	4,719		valid
X4	0.692	2,878		valid
X5	0.774	3,673	2,201	valid
X6	0.856	4,965		valid
X7	0.864	5,139		valid
X8	0.643	2,522		valid
X9	0.630	2,435		valid
X10	0.730	3,207		valid
X11	0.689	2,852		valid

Source: Researcher Data Processing Results, 2025

Table 5. Results of Student Trust Validity Test (Y)

Item Number	Correlation Coefficient (r)	t count	t table	Information
Y1	0.796	3,952		Valid
Y2	0.836	4,573		valid
Y3	0.837	4,588		valid
Y4	0.866	5,201		valid
Y5	0.764	3,553	2,201	valid
Y6	0.869	5,277		valid
Y7	0.864	5,145		valid
Y8	0.838	4,615		valid

Source: Researcher Data Processing Results, 2025

Reliability Test

Reliability testing was conducted to assess the level of internal consistency among the statement items for each research variable. The analysis was performed using the Cronbach's Alpha method with the assistance of IBM SPSS Statistics version 27, which was consistently used throughout the data analysis process. An instrument is considered reliable if it achieves a Cronbach's Alpha value of $\geq$ 0.70, indicating acceptable internal consistency and suitability for quantitative research (Sharma, 2016).

Based on the results of the data analysis, the Cronbach's Alpha value for Variable X (Use of the Info Garut Instagram Media), consisting of 11 statement items, was 0.916. Similarly, Variable Y (Student Trust in the Info Garut Instagram Account), which comprises 8 statement items, also yielded a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.916. Since both values exceed the recommended reliability threshold, it can be concluded that the research instrument demonstrates high reliability and strong internal consistency in measuring the constructs under investigation.

Table 6. Results of the Reliability Test of Research Instruments

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Criteria	Information
X (Instagram Media Usage)	11	0.916	$\geq$ 0.70	Reliable
Y (Student Trust)	8	0.916	$\geq$ 0.70	Reliable

Source: Researcher Data Processing Results, 2025

The results of the validity and reliability tests show that all statement items in the Instagram Media Use variable And Student Trust has met the eligibility criteria. The item-total correlation value for each item is above the minimum limit, and the Cronbach's Alpha value for both variables is above 0.70. This indicates that the research instrument has a good level of internal consistency and is reliable, making it suitable for use in the regression analysis stage to test the effect of Instagram media use on student trust.

The results of normality with the PP Plot Regression Standardized Residual are shown in the following graph:
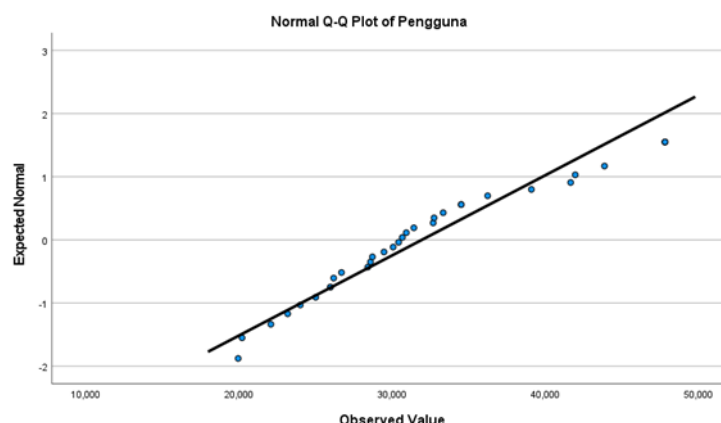
Graph 1 Results of PP Plot Regression Analysis Standardized Residual

In this section, the researcher discusses the research results by linking them to the theoretical basis and previous research results. The use of Instagram social media can influence student trust, which is a form of public response or reaction to the consistency of the information received. The responses in this study were positive, as indicated by high levels of trust, assessment of content credibility, and the emergence of informational dependence on local issues. In this context, the use of Instagram media @infogarut is the main factor influencing the perception and level of trust of respondents as part of the digital community in Garut Regency.

The findings of this study are consistent with digital mass communication scholarship, which highlights that the credibility of online information is strongly influenced by its accuracy, transparency, and relevance (Metzger et al., 2021). Social media platforms such as Instagram function not only as channels for news dissemination but also as interactive communication spaces where audiences actively negotiate meaning and form evaluative judgments about information credibility (Hoque, 2022). Continuous exposure to and engagement with social media content enable students to assess the trustworthiness of information through heuristic and contextual cues, thereby shaping public opinion and audience trust in digital environments (Xu et al., 2025).

The results of this study also support The Dependency Theory of Mass Media Effects, which states that media has a strong influence when individuals or groups of people depend on it to meet their information needs. In the context of this research, students at Garut University use the Instagram account @infogarut as their primary source of information regarding events, public policies, and social phenomena in their local area. The more students rely on these accounts as a source of fast and easily accessible information, the greater the influence of the content presented on the formation of their beliefs. Individuals' reliance on social media for local information influences how they evaluate media messages and strengthens their behavioral intentions to continue using these media as their primary reference.

This finding also aligns with the concept of digital mass communication, which states that information presented accurately, transparently, and relevantly can shape perceptions of credibility. In this case, social media acts as a communication space that allows for the exchange of meaning and persuasive validation of information. When students feel their information needs are consistently met by @infogarut, this dependency effect will crystallize into a stable trust.

Simple Linear Regression Test

Simple linear regression analysis was used in this study to analyze the Influence of the Use of Info Garut Instagram Media on the Trust of Garut University Students. The analysis was conducted to determine the relationship and extent of influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable based on data obtained from respondents. A summary of the data processing results is presented in the following table:

Table 7. Simple Linear Regression Test

Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	R	R²	F	Sig. F
(Constant)	2439,714	2806,233	–	0.869	0.392				
Use of Instagram Media Info Garut	0.597	0.085	0.787	6,988	0,000	0.787	0.619	48,832	0,000

The results of the simple linear regression analysis in this study show:

1. The correlation coefficient (R) shows a strong and positive relationship between the use of Instagram media @infogarut and the level of trust of Garut University students, with the coefficient value reflecting the closeness of the relationship between the two variables.
2. The coefficient of determination (R²) explains how much of the percentage of variation in students' level of trust can be explained by the use of the Instagram infogarut media, while the rest is influenced by other factors outside this research model.
3. The model feasibility test (F test) shows that the regression model used is feasible and statistically significant in predicting the trust variable, as evidenced by the significance value being below the threshold of 0.05 ($p < 0.05$).
4. Regression coefficient the variable of use of Instagram media infogarut has a coefficient value of 0.597 with a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), which indicates a positive and significant influence on the level of student trust.

Hypothesis Testing

Based on the results of the simple linear regression test, a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) was obtained. Thus, the null hypothesis (H0) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H1) was accepted, which stated that the use of Instagram media @infogarut had a significant effect on the level of trust of Garut University students. This shows that the more effective and intensive the use of Instagram media, the higher the level of trust held by students as an audience.

Interpretation of Main Findings

The results of the study indicate that the use of Info Garut Instagram media has a positive and significant effect on the level of trust of Garut University students. This finding is indicated by the

regression coefficient value of 0.597 with a significance level of p = 0.000, which is below the specified error level (α = 0.05) . This indicates that the higher the intensity of use of Info Garut Instagram media, the higher the level of trust of students in the information presented. Thus, the research hypothesis stating that there is a positive influence of the use of Instagram Info Garut media on students' level of trust can be accepted.

Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R^2) value of 0.619 indicates that the use of Instagram Info Garut media is able to explain 61.9% of the variation in students' trust levels. Meanwhile, 38.1 % of the variation in students' trust is influenced by other factors outside the research model. These factors can include the credibility of other information sources, students' experience in consuming digital news, media literacy levels, and the influence of recommendations from the social environment. This finding confirms that although Instagram Info Garut has a fairly dominant role in shaping students' trust, there are other external factors that also influence the level of audience trust.

The positive influence of using Info Garut Instagram media on students' level of trust shows that local social media that is managed consistently and informatively is able to build trust in digital audiences. The intensity of content exposure, utilization of Instagram features, and interaction between account managers and followers are important factors in shaping students' positive perceptions of the credibility of information. Therefore, a social media management strategy that prioritizes accuracy, clarity of sources, and openness of information is essential to maintain audience trust.

This influence may be partly explained by the role of Instagram's content distribution mechanisms, which tend to prioritize posts with higher levels of user engagement, as suggested by previous studies on social media algorithms. Such mechanisms can increase the likelihood of repeated exposure to information from the Info Garut Instagram account, which may enhance users' attention and familiarity with the content. Prior research indicates that repeated exposure to consistent information can support cognitive evaluations of credibility and contribute to trust formation in digital media. Therefore, the observed relationship between Instagram usage and student trust in this study can be interpreted as being theoretically consistent with existing literature on social media exposure and trust, rather than as direct evidence of algorithmic causality.

Theoretically, the findings of this study align with the Dependency Theory of Mass Media Effects, which states that the greater the audience's dependence on a medium as a source of information, the greater the influence of that medium on the audience's attitudes and beliefs. Furthermore, the results of this study also support the concept of trust in mass communication, which emphasizes the importance of consistency, credibility, and interaction in building relationships between the media and the audience.

Theoretically, the findings of this study are consistent with Media System Dependency Theory, which posits that the more audiences depend on media as a primary source of information, the greater the potential influence of that media on their attitudes, beliefs, and interpretations of social reality. Recent studies reaffirm that media dependency represents a dynamic relationship between audiences, media systems, and the broader social environment, particularly within contemporary digital contexts where media platforms play a central role in fulfilling informational needs. In the era of social media, increased reliance on digital platforms as dominant information sources has

been shown to intensify media effects by shaping how individuals evaluate credibility, relevance, and social meaning of information (Neging et al., 2025).

Empirical evidence further demonstrates that high exposure to social media, viewed through the lens of media-system dependency, significantly contributes to the formation of social confidence and belief systems, reinforcing the media's role in influencing public perception (Liu & Id, 2024). Moreover, trust in mass communication remains a crucial mediating factor, as perceptions of credibility, consistency, and interactional quality strengthen audience acceptance of media messages and enhance the overall impact of media dependency in environments increasingly characterized by misinformation (Christofoletti & Postal, 2024).

Comparison with Previous Studies

The findings of this study are consistent with recent research indicating that social media use significantly influences audience trust and perceptions of information credibility. Previous research shows that social media activity is positively associated with trust in news disseminated through digital platforms, where engagement patterns such as frequency of use and interaction play an important role in shaping trust formation in digital news environments (Hariyani, 2025). Furthermore, studies demonstrate that following verified news accounts on social media enhances users' ability to distinguish accurate information from misinformation and increases trust in news media institutions, indicating that credibility cues on social platforms contribute to belief accuracy and trust development (Altay et al., 2025). In addition, research published in international communication journals highlights that users' perceptions of a platform's usefulness and interactive features are closely related to credibility assessments, reinforcing the notion that platform characteristics and user engagement jointly influence trust in digital information sources (Strömbäck et al., 2020).

Similarly, research on "The Influence of Instagram as a COVID-19 News Media on Students' Trust Levels" found that using Instagram as a news source significantly impacted students' trust levels. These findings demonstrate that social media plays a significant role in shaping audience trust in the information they receive (Nurmalinda & Purworini, 2022).

The findings of this study reinforce those of previous research by emphasizing the effectiveness of Instagram as a visual-based social media platform in building audience trust. The difference lies in the research context: previous studies focused on national media and health issues, while this study specifically highlights the role of local media, namely Instagram Info Garut, in shaping students' trust in regional information(Al-mshashaqbeh, 2025).

Limitations and Warnings

This study provides in-depth insight into the influence of the use of social media Instagram infogarut on the level of trust of Garut University students, however, there are still several limitations that need to be considered. First, the cross-sectional nature of quantitative research design limits researchers' ability to capture the dynamics of changes in audience beliefs in depth over a long period of time. Second, data collected through self -report questionnaires has the

potential for subjective bias, where respondents may tend to provide answers that appear ideal. Third, the study's limited sample size to students at one particular university limits the generalizability of these findings to the general population with more diverse educational backgrounds, ages, and media literacy.

Future research should employ mixed methods or a longitudinal design to explore other qualitative factors influencing trust, such as the visual quality of content or interaction in comment sections. Furthermore, it is recommended that future researchers involve a broader and more diverse sample in Garut Regency to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role of local social media in shaping public opinion and trust at large.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should focus on strengthening the methodological design with a longitudinal approach to monitor changes in students' trust levels over time and establish a clearer causal relationship between the intensity of Instagram use and the stability of audience trust. Additionally, analysis of specific factors, such as the types of visual content that most influence perceived credibility or students' interaction patterns with algorithms and interactive features on Instagram, could provide deeper insights into the mechanisms by which local social media influences audience cognition.

Expanding the sample to other universities and the broader socio-cultural background of the Garut Regency community would increase the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, the application of mixed methods, such as a combination of quantitative surveys and in-depth qualitative interviews, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the psychological reasons behind students' informational dependence on social media and support the development of more transparent and effective digital information management strategies in the future.

CONCLUSION

The use of Instagram media @infogarut has been proven to have a significant influence on the cognitive aspects of Garut University students, as shown by the results of the analysis and data processing that have been carried out in this study. This cognitive aspect is closely related to students' knowledge, understanding, and perception of the local information presented. Media usage indicators including access intensity, focus of attention, and utilization of Instagram features play an important role in shaping respondents' understanding of current issues, public policies, and social events in Garut. Information delivered consistently through accurate and transparent content uploads can broaden students' horizons and build the perception that @infogarut is a credible reference source. Thus, Instagram @infogarut not only functions as social media, but also as a means of fulfilling information needs that provide new knowledge for students who actively access the content.

The use of Instagram media @infogarut also has a significant influence on students' affective aspects, namely aspects related to feelings, emotions, and levels of confidence. The affective aspect

arises when students feel emotional closeness and a sense of trust after seeing the consistency and professionalism of the content presented. In this study, the ethics of reporting and objectivity of information demonstrated by @infogarut were able to create a sense of security, satisfaction, and confidence in respondents. Students' trust in the account as an honest source of local information also strengthened the positive emotional response. This shows that presenting information in an ethical manner can build a bond of trust between students and the media, thereby increasing positive attitudes towards any information published.

In addition, the use of Instagram media @infogarut has also been proven to have a significant influence on students' conative aspects, namely the tendency to act or behave after receiving information exposure. The conative aspect in this study is reflected in the emergence of students' desire to use information from @infogarut as a basis for decision-making, re-share the information, and carry out further verification. Based on the research results, it is known that the information presented through the @infogarut account encourages students to act actively, both in discussing local issues and in responding to social phenomena that occur. This shows that the use of Instagram media does not only stop at the formation of knowledge and feelings, but is also able to encourage real actions in the form of informational dependence and active participation. Thus, Instagram @infogarut has a strategic role in influencing student behavior and maintaining the stability of the flow of information in the Garut community in a sustainable manner.

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