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Business Communication Strategies in Building Brand Awareness on the Instagram Account of UMJ Press Academic Publisher

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ABSTRACT: The rapid development of digital technology has positioned social media as a strategic channel for organisational communication, including for academic publishers seeking to enhance brand visibility. This study examines how UMJ Press utilises Instagram as a digital communication platform to build brand awareness as an academic publisher. Employing a qualitative case study design, data were collected through in-depth interviews with the Instagram account manager and active followers, participatory observation of feed posts, stories, and reels, and documentation of audience interactions. The data were analysed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns related to content strategy, visual identity, interaction management, and audience perceptions of brand recognition and recall. The findings indicate that brand awareness is shaped through consistent visual branding, the dominance of educational and informative content, and active engagement practices that encourage audience interaction. Short video formats (reels) and interactive features (stories) were associated with higher engagement patterns as reflected in audience responses such as shares and saves. Brand recognition emerged through consistent design elements and thematic coherence, while brand recall was reflected in participants' ability to spontaneously associate UMJ Press with academic publishing activities. This study contributes to the literature by extending Integrated Marketing Communication, Uses and Gratifications Theory, and Social Media Engagement perspectives into the context of academic publishing, a sector that has received limited attention in Instagram-based branding research. The findings suggest that strategically managed Instagram communication can support the development of brand awareness within credibility-driven institutional contexts.

Keywords: Digital Communication, Instagram, Brand Awareness, Academic Publisher, UMJ Press.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has fundamentally transformed the landscape of business communication. Organisations are no longer limited to one-way message delivery but are increasingly engaged in dialogical and participatory interactions with their audiences. This shift is closely tied to the evolution of social media marketing (SMM) as a strategic field, where brands move from simply "broadcasting" information toward building relationships, communities, and ongoing conversations with users. Social media has become a central communication ecosystem that shapes branding, marketing, and public relations strategies. In

line with dialogic communication theory, the quality of organisational communication increasingly depends on reciprocity, responsiveness, and the extent to which audiences are positioned as active participants rather than passive receivers (Kent & Taylor, 2020). In this environment, communication effectiveness depends not only on message exposure but also on audience engagement, interaction quality, and the consistency of brand representation across platforms.

For academic institutions and scientific publishers, digital communication presents both opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, social media platforms such as Instagram provide access to broader and more diverse audiences beyond traditional academic networks. On the other hand, academic publishers must maintain scientific credibility and institutional legitimacy while adapting to visually driven, algorithm-based communication systems. From a marketing management perspective, this tension reflects the need to align communication activities with the organisation's value proposition and brand meaning, while ensuring message clarity and coherence across touchpoints (Kotler & Keller, 2016). In institutional contexts, digital communication strategies are often expected to strengthen both awareness and brand image, not merely increase visibility; this is consistent with findings that strategic digital communication can simultaneously shape recognition, perceived professionalism, and reputational cues (Jannah et al., 2025). This dual demand creates a unique communication context that differs from profit-oriented commercial brands. Moreover, Instagram's algorithmic curation encourages content formats and interaction patterns that may not naturally align with scholarly conventions, requiring publishers to translate academic credibility into platform-friendly narratives and visuals (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2024).

Brand awareness plays a foundational role in digital brand management. It refers to an audience's ability to recognise and recall a brand within specific contexts (Keller, 2020). In social media environments, brand awareness is shaped not only by frequency of exposure but also by content relevance, visual identity consistency, and interaction dynamics. Recent empirical studies further show that specific social media marketing elements such as entertainment value, informativeness, interactivity, and perceived credibility can influence consumer brand engagement and subsequently strengthen brand awareness and brand image (Rosdiana & Indrawati, 2025). For academic publishers, brand awareness extends beyond name recognition to include associations with credibility, scholarly value, and publication quality. This is important because awareness in social media settings can function as an entry point to broader customer-based brand equity (CBBE) outcomes; for example, Instagram social media marketing activities (SMMAs) have been linked to multiple CBBE dimensions, indicating that awareness often develops alongside stronger brand associations and perceived value (Singh et al., 2025). In emerging economy contexts, social media marketing has also been shown to shape awareness and engagement in ways that may ultimately support behavioural intentions, suggesting that the awareness process is intertwined with social validation and interactive cues (Zeqiri et al., 2024).

Although numerous studies have examined Instagram marketing strategies and brand awareness formation in commercial sectors, limited research has explored how academic publishers utilise Instagram to build brand awareness within credibility-driven institutional contexts. Most existing

literature focuses on consumer brands, purchase intention, and customer-based brand equity. Consequently, the intersection between academic legitimacy and visually mediated digital engagement remains underexplored. Evidence from commercial and SME-focused studies illustrates how Instagram communication strategies are commonly evaluated through awareness growth and performance-oriented outcomes such as improved recognition, brand recall, or purchase-related responses. Similarly, research on younger consumer segments (e.g., Generation Z) frequently connects social media marketing with both brand awareness and purchase intention, reinforcing the dominance of consumer-market assumptions in the broader literature (Pratiwi & Chandra, 2025). A systematic review of social media marketing scholarship also suggests that much of the field's empirical emphasis remains anchored in consumer-brand settings, leaving institutional and credibility-based organisations comparatively underrepresented (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2022).

This gap is particularly important because academic publishers operate within value structures that prioritise intellectual authority and trust rather than commercial persuasion. Understanding how digital communication strategies function in this context may extend theoretical insights from Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), and Social Media Engagement Theory beyond commercial branding environments. In other words, the central question is not only whether Instagram increases visibility, but how strategic communication practices can translate scholarly identity into recognisable and memorable brand cues while maintaining legitimacy and fostering meaningful interaction.

Therefore, this study examines how UMJ Press implements Instagram-based digital communication strategies to build brand awareness as an academic publisher. The study addresses the following research question:

RQ: How does UMJ Press utilise Instagram as a digital communication platform to build brand awareness within an academic publishing context?

By focusing on a qualitative case study of UMJ Press, this research contributes to digital communication scholarship by demonstrating how message consistency, audience-oriented content, and engagement practices interact to shape brand recognition and recall in a non-commercial institutional setting. This focus responds directly to the need for more context-sensitive explanations of brand awareness formation on Instagram explanations that account for credibility demands, institutional identity, and the platform's interaction logic.

Theoretical Implications

First, the findings reinforce the relevance of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) principles in digital environments. Visual and narrative consistency across feed posts, stories, and reels demonstrates how message alignment contributes to brand recognition. This pattern reflects the integrated marketing approach, which emphasises coordination and coherence across communication channels to produce a unified brand meaning (Schultz & Kitchen, 2000).

However, unlike commercial brands that often prioritise persuasive appeals and sales-driven messaging, UMJ Press's strategy emphasises informational value and academic credibility. From a broader marketing communication perspective, consistency functions as a strategic mechanism that reduces ambiguity in audience interpretation and stabilises brand associations over repeated exposures. In the social media era, IMC also intersects with brand equity building, because consistent brand cues across digital touchpoints support stronger awareness and more durable brand knowledge structures (Purwati & Ariyani, 2025). This suggests that IMC in institutional contexts operates not merely through promotional consistency but through coherence between communication practices and scholarly identity.

Second, the study supports the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) by showing that audience engagement was strongly associated with educational and informative content. Participants reported saving and sharing posts that provided academic writing guidance and publishing insights. This indicates that brand awareness in academic contexts is closely linked to cognitive gratification rather than entertainment-oriented motivations typically observed in commercial Instagram marketing. Such patterns align with the original UGT argument that media use is purposive, shaped by audience needs for information, learning, and problem-solving (Katz et al., 1973). Within Instagram marketing contexts, informational content has also been positioned as a driver of awareness and marketing performance, suggesting that platform use can be oriented toward functional and knowledge-based value rather than purely hedonic engagement. As a comparative lens, studies focusing on Generation Z frequently link social media marketing exposure to awareness and behavioural intentions, highlighting that gratification processes may differ by segment and motivational structure.

Third, the findings contribute to Social Media Engagement Theory by illustrating that engagement is not limited to algorithmic visibility but also reflects relational dynamics. Active responses to comments and direct messages appeared to strengthen perceived closeness between UMJ Press and its followers. Engagement in this context functions as a relational bridge that supports both brand recognition and recall. This interpretation resonates with customer engagement scholarship that conceptualises engagement as interactive, value-creating, and relational often developing through repeated exchanges in brand communities rather than through one-off metrics (Brodie et al., 2021). It also aligns with dialogic communication theory, which highlights responsiveness and mutuality as key drivers of relationship quality in digital communication. Furthermore, engagement outcomes are likely shaped by perceived content quality and source credibility, reinforcing the importance of informational reliability for institutional brands operating in trust-sensitive environments (Khandolkar et al., 2025).

Alternative Explanations

While the findings suggest that communication strategy plays an important role in shaping brand awareness, alternative explanations should be considered. First, Instagram's algorithmic system may have influenced content visibility independently of strategic intent. Posts in reel format, for instance, may receive higher reach due to platform prioritisation of short video content rather

than solely because of communication effectiveness. From a social media marketing perspective, platform dynamics including algorithmic ranking, format preferences, and shifting attention patterns can amplify certain content types regardless of organisational planning, meaning engagement and reach may partly reflect platform governance rather than communication quality alone.

Second, the participants selected as active followers may already possess a predisposition toward academic publishing interests. This self-selection effect may contribute to higher engagement levels and stronger brand recall compared to general audiences. In social media ecosystems, engagement is not only a product of message exposure but is also shaped by psychological factors (e.g., intrinsic motivation, perceived relevance, identification) and environmental cues (e.g., social proof, creator-audience dynamics), which can intensify interaction even when strategic differences are minimal (Gu & Duan, 2024). In this sense, follower engagement may partly reflect prior motivation and topical alignment rather than the communication strategy itself.

A third alternative explanation concerns the role of content attributes that operate beyond overall strategy. Engagement and brand outcomes may be driven by perceived content quality and source credibility particularly important for institutional actors so audiences may respond more strongly because they trust the publisher's authority and find the information reliable, not simply because the communication plan is well executed. Acknowledging these alternative factors prevents overgeneralisation and situates the findings within broader digital platform dynamics.

Practical Implications

The findings offer several practical implications for academic publishers and similar institutions:

1. Prioritising Educational Value

Educational and informative content appears more effective in stimulating engagement and reinforcing brand memory. This can be understood through a Uses and Gratifications lens, where audiences actively seek media content that satisfies cognitive needs such as learning, guidance, and problem-solving. Academic publishers may therefore consider adopting a content ratio that balances promotion with educational insights. In institutional branding, such knowledge-oriented communication can simultaneously strengthen awareness and shape a credible brand image, particularly when content signals expertise and usefulness. This approach is also consistent with evidence that Instagram-based marketing can improve awareness and performance when content is aligned with audience value and informational relevance (Chesaria & Sunaryo, 2023).

2. Maintaining Visual Governance

Consistent colour schemes, typography, and layout structures contribute to recognisable visual identity. Establishing visual guidelines can support long-term brand coherence. Visual culture scholarship highlights that repeated visual cues function as symbolic markers that help audiences recognise and categorise brands quickly in crowded media environments (Schroeder, 2023). Empirical Instagram studies also suggest that a strong and consistent visual brand identity can significantly improve brand awareness, and case-based evidence shows that deliberate Instagram communication strategies can strengthen brand recognition through consistent presentation and identifiable design patterns (Anandianskha & Harahap, 2025).

3. Utilising Format Diversity Strategically

Reels may enhance visibility and reach, while feed posts maintain institutional credibility and permanence. Stories can foster immediacy and interaction. From a tactical social media marketing standpoint, selecting formats should be tied to communication goals, because each feature supports different levels of attention, depth, and interaction (Tuten & Solomon, 2022). Creative strategy research further suggests that content effectiveness depends on matching narrative style and execution to platform norms and audience expectations, not simply repeating the same message in different forms (Ashley & Tuten, 2022). Studies of Instagram communication practices also show that feature use and content structuring are associated with improved brand awareness outcomes (Putra & Sari, 2024).

4. Strengthening Interaction Norms

Responsive comment management and direct engagement practices may enhance relational trust and audience attachment. Dialogic communication theory positions responsiveness and reciprocity as indicators of relationship quality, implying that active interaction is a strategic asset rather than an optional activity. This is reinforced by engagement theory, which frames engagement as relational and value co-creating built through repeated, meaningful exchanges rather than surface metrics alone. Moreover, social media marketing elements such as interactivity and informativeness have been linked to stronger engagement, awareness, and brand image, suggesting that interaction norms can influence multiple brand outcomes simultaneously.

These implications highlight that digital communication in academic contexts should integrate credibility, informational value, and interaction management rather than rely solely on exposure frequency.

Limitations

This study has several limitations.

First, the research focuses on a single case study of UMJ Press, which limits generalisability to other academic publishers. Institutional culture and communication practices may vary across contexts.

Second, the study examines one platform (Instagram), while brand awareness may also be influenced by other digital channels such as websites, LinkedIn, or academic databases.

Third, the findings rely on self-reported audience perceptions and observable engagement metrics within a defined time frame. Longitudinal studies may provide deeper insights into sustained brand awareness development.

Future Research Directions

Future research may expand the scope by:

1. Conducting comparative studies between multiple academic publishers
2. Exploring cross-platform digital communication strategies
3. Examining longitudinal engagement patterns
4. Integrating quantitative engagement analytics with qualitative insights

Such approaches may provide broader theoretical refinement regarding digital branding in institutional and non-commercial sectors.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative case study design to explore how UMJ Press utilizes Instagram as a digital communication platform to build brand awareness. A case study approach was selected because it enables an in-depth examination of a contemporary communication phenomenon within its real-life institutional context (Creswell & Poth, 2023). UMJ Press was chosen as a single case due to its active use of Instagram as a strategic communication channel within an academic publishing environment.

Research Context and Time Frame

The study was conducted between January and June 2024. During this period, UMJ Press actively managed its Instagram account by publishing various forms of content, including feeds, stories, and reels. This defined time boundary ensured contextual consistency in observing communication patterns and audience engagement dynamics.

Participants and Sampling

Data were collected from two main groups of informants:

1. The Instagram account manager of UMJ Press.
2. Twenty active followers of the UMJ Press Instagram account.

Active followers were defined as users who had interacted with UMJ Press content (e.g., liked, commented, shared, or saved posts) at least three times within the previous three months. A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants who were considered capable of providing rich and relevant information regarding communication strategies and audience perceptions (Guest et al., 2023).

This sampling approach ensured that participants had direct experience engaging with UMJ Press's digital communication practices.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using three complementary methods:

1. In-depth interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the account manager and selected followers to explore communication objectives, content planning processes, visual identity considerations, and perceptions of brand recognition and recall. Interviews allowed participants to articulate their experiences and interpretations from their own perspectives (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2023)

2. Participatory observation

The researcher observed UMJ Press's Instagram activities, including feed posts, reels, stories, captions, and interaction patterns in the comment sections. Observation focused on visual consistency, message framing, posting frequency, and engagement indicators such as likes, comments, shares, and saves.

3. Documentation

Supporting data were collected in the form of screenshots, content archives, and publicly available engagement statistics to provide contextual and visual evidence of communication practices.

The use of multiple data sources enabled triangulation and strengthened the credibility of findings.

Data Analysis

The data were analysed using thematic analysis following the six-phase framework proposed by Braun & Clarke, (2023):

1. Familiarisation with the data
2. Generating initial codes
3. Searching for themes

4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Producing the report

Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentation were coded inductively to identify recurring patterns related to content strategy, visual identity, audience engagement, and brand awareness (recognition and recall). Themes were refined iteratively to ensure conceptual clarity and alignment with the research question.

Trustworthiness

To enhance research rigor, several strategies were applied:

1. Triangulation: Data were obtained from interviews, observation, and documentation.
2. Member checking: Selected participants reviewed summaries of interview interpretations to confirm accuracy.
3. Audit trail: The researcher maintained systematic documentation of coding decisions and analytical steps.

These measures helped ensure credibility, dependability, and transparency of the findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2022).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were observed throughout the research process. Participants provided informed consent prior to interviews. Anonymity was maintained by using participant codes instead of real names. Data were stored securely and used solely for academic research purposes.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The thematic analysis generated five major themes related to UMJ Press's Instagram communication strategy and its role in shaping brand awareness: (1) content strategy orientation, (2) visual identity consistency, (3) feature utilisation patterns, (4) audience interaction and engagement, and (5) brand recognition and recall formation.

1. Content Strategy Orientation

Findings indicate that UMJ Press organises its Instagram content into three primary categories: book promotion, educational content related to academic writing and publishing, and institutional information. Among these categories, educational content generated relatively higher audience responses, particularly in the form of saves and shares.

Several participants emphasised that educational posts were perceived as more valuable:

"I usually save posts about writing tips because they are useful for my research work." (Participant 6)

"The content about publishing procedures is helpful, not just promotional." (Participant 11)

These responses suggest that informational value plays a central role in attracting audience attention. The dominance of educational content also reflects a strategic attempt to align digital communication practices with academic identity.

From a branded content perspective, this orientation suggests a deliberate creative strategy: instead of relying on overt promotional appeals, UMJ Press invests in "utility-driven" content that offers practical value and supports audience goals. This is important because social media marketing effectiveness increasingly depends on how well content fits audience needs and platform expectations, including perceived relevance and credibility. In addition, engagement outcomes particularly saves and shares can be interpreted as indicators of content quality and trust. Prior research shows that content quality and source credibility play a significant role in driving social media brand engagement, especially when audiences judge whether a post is worth storing or endorsing through sharing. This aligns with evidence that social media marketing elements such as informativeness and credibility can strengthen consumer brand engagement and contribute to brand awareness formation. Therefore, UMJ Press's emphasis on educational posts appears to function as both a brand-building tactic and a credibility signal: the account communicates institutional expertise while giving followers "reasons to return," which supports repeated exposure and memory reinforcement over time.

2. Visual Identity Consistency

Observation results show that UMJ Press maintains relatively consistent visual elements across its posts, including colour schemes, typography, and layout structure. This visual repetition enables easier identification of UMJ Press content within users' timelines.

Participants acknowledged this consistency:

"I can immediately recognise UMJ Press posts because the design style is consistent." (Participant 3)

"The blue academic theme makes it easy to distinguish from other accounts." (Participant 14)

These findings indicate that visual consistency contributes to brand recognition by strengthening associative memory through repeated exposure to similar design elements. This finding resonates strongly with visual branding arguments that meaning-making in digital culture is increasingly shaped by repeated visual cues such as colour, layout, and typographic systems that enable quick recognition in fast-scrolling environments. In Instagram contexts, visual identity consistency is not merely aesthetic; it operates as a cognitive shortcut that helps audiences categorise content and attribute it to a specific institution even before reading captions. Empirical research supports this mechanism: visual brand identity on Instagram has been linked to improved brand awareness because consistency strengthens recognisability and supports recall processes (Saragih

& Fikri, 2025). Moreover, studies examining Instagram-based brand recognition show that structured and consistent presentation can make audiences more likely to identify a brand quickly and develop stronger recognition patterns over time. In the UMJ Press case, the "academic" visual tone (e.g., stable colour palette and structured layout) appears to function as a credibility cue as well as a recognition device helping the publisher differentiate itself from entertainment-focused accounts while still leveraging Instagram's visual logic.

3. Feature Utilisation Patterns

UMJ Press utilises different Instagram features for distinct communication purposes:

1. Feed posts for formal and permanent information
2. Stories for short updates and interactive polls
3. Reels for dynamic and visually engaging short videos

Observation data show that reels tended to generate higher reach and interaction rates compared to static posts during the research period. Audience members reported that short video formats were more engaging:

"I prefer reels because they explain things quickly and visually." (Participant 9)

"Reels feel more dynamic and attract my attention more than regular posts." (Participant 18)

This pattern indicates that format diversity influences audience interaction behaviour. This differentiated use of features is consistent with the view that social media marketing is not only about "what" is communicated but also "how" it is formatted for attention, comprehension, and interaction. In Instagram's environment, formats operate as strategic levers: reels can maximise reach and discovery, feed posts can signal permanence and institutional seriousness, and stories can invite lightweight participation through polls or quick responses. Prior studies of Instagram communication strategies similarly highlight that feature selection and format design can support brand awareness outcomes, because audiences interact differently with static posts versus short-form video and ephemeral content. From a broader strategic lens, platform principles and algorithmic tendencies also make format choices consequential; social media marketing strategies must account for how platform systems prioritise certain formats, which can indirectly shape awareness by amplifying visibility and engagement opportunities. Thus, UMJ Press's format diversity can be interpreted as a pragmatic adaptation: the publisher maintains credibility through structured feed content while leveraging reels to extend reach and attract attention in an algorithmically competitive space (Utomo et al., 2024).

4. Audience Interaction and Engagement

Audience engagement was reflected through likes, comments, shares, and saves. Educational content and visually structured posts tended to generate more meaningful engagement, particularly shares and saves, indicating perceived usefulness.

The account manager explained:

"We try to respond to comments quickly because interaction is important for maintaining audience interest." (Account Manager)

Followers also reported that responsive interaction increased their sense of connection:

"When they reply to comments, it feels more personal." (Participant 12)

These findings demonstrate that engagement is not limited to quantitative metrics but also involves relational dimensions between the institution and its audience. This relational interpretation is strongly aligned with dialogic communication theory, where responsiveness, mutuality, and conversational openness are treated as markers of relationship quality rather than optional "add-ons". In addition, engagement scholarship emphasises that customer engagement is multidimensionalreflecting emotional connection, cognitive investment, and behavioural participation often strengthened through repeated interaction and perceived relational closeness.

Within the UMJ Press case, quick replies and interactive exchanges (comments and direct messages) appear to cultivate a sense of institutional approachability, which may be especially valuable for academic publishing audiences who seek guidance and reassurance in the publishing process. Furthermore, engagement dynamics on social media are shaped not only by interaction features but also by psychological factors such as intrinsic motivation, perceived autonomy, and relevance mechanisms that can intensify participation even in informational contexts (Gu & Duan, 2024). Finally, engagement levels may also reflect perceived credibility and content quality: audiences may be more willing to comment, share, or save when they trust the account's authority and regard the information as reliable and well-produced. Together, these points suggest that UMJ Press's engagement is best understood as an ongoing relationship-building process, where interaction norms, audience motivations, and credibility cues jointly support sustained participation rather than short-lived visibility spikes.

5. Brand Recognition and Brand Recall Formation

Brand awareness emerged in two identifiable dimensions: recognition and recall.

Brand recognition was reflected in participants' ability to identify UMJ Press posts based on visual style and thematic consistency without explicitly reading the account name.

Brand recall was observed when participants were asked about academic publishers and spontaneously mentioned UMJ Press:

"When talking about campus publishing, UMJ Press is one of the first that comes to mind." (Participant 7)

"If someone asks about scientific book publishing at UMJ, I remember their Instagram." (Participant 15)

In addition to name recall, participants associated UMJ Press with academic credibility and structured publishing processes. This suggests that brand awareness extended beyond visual familiarity toward cognitive association with institutional identity. These findings align directly with the classic brand awareness distinction between recognition (identifying the brand when

presented with cues) and recall (retrieving the brand from memory without prompts). In marketing terms, repeated exposure to stable cues visual identity, consistent themes, and predictable content categories supports associative learning, where audiences connect the brand with specific meanings (e.g., "academic publishing guidance" and "institutional credibility").

Importantly, the presence of both recognition and recall suggests that the account's strategy may contribute not only to surface-level familiarity but also to deeper brand knowledge structures that can strengthen customer-based brand equity over time. Research on Instagram marketing activities indicates that repeated, structured brand activity can reinforce CBBE dimensions by strengthening brand associations and perceived value implying that awareness can operate as a gateway to broader equity outcomes, even in non-commercial settings. In addition, empirical work on Instagram-based brand recognition shows that consistent content presentation and identifiable design elements can accelerate recognition processes and make brand cues "stand out" amid competing posts. Therefore, UMJ Press's awareness outcomes appear to be built through a layered mechanism: visual cues support recognition, repeated informational value supports memory reinforcement, and credibility-linked associations support recall and potentially longer-term equity development.

The results suggest that UMJ Press's Instagram strategy functions as an integrated awareness-building system: educational content increases perceived usefulness (and saves/shares), consistent visuals strengthen recognition, format diversity improves reach and attention, dialogic interaction cultivates relational closeness, and together these elements support both recognition and recall in a credibility-driven institutional context.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how UMJ Press utilises Instagram as a digital communication platform to build brand awareness within an academic publishing context. Using a qualitative case study approach, the findings indicate that brand awareness is shaped through the integration of educational content, visual identity consistency, strategic use of platform features, and responsive audience interaction.

Brand recognition emerged through repeated exposure to coherent visual elements and thematic patterns, while brand recall was reflected in participants' spontaneous association of UMJ Press with academic publishing activities. The results suggest that in credibility-driven institutional environments, digital communication effectiveness depends not only on exposure frequency but also on informational value and relational engagement.

Theoretically, this study extends Integrated Marketing Communication, Uses and Gratifications Theory, and Social Media Engagement perspectives into the domain of academic publishing, demonstrating that digital branding strategies operate differently in non-commercial institutional settings. Practically, the findings highlight the importance of aligning visual governance, educational value, and interaction management to support sustainable brand awareness development.

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