

Diffusion of Innovation in Hospitals: Exploring the Benefits and Challenges of Using Instagram

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Abstract - Instagram is a potential platform for disseminating information to the public, mainly health-related information. The Tanah Abang Regional General Hospital (RSUD Tanah Abang) has adopted Instagram as a medium for providing health information and services. This study aims to analyze the utilization of Instagram by RSUD Tanah Abang as an information platform for the public. The research used a qualitative approach with a constructivist paradigm, employing the Diffusion of Innovation theory as an analytical tool. Data was collected through observations of the @rsudtanahabang account and in-depth interviews with the public relations team and its followers. The findings show that RSUD Tanah Abang adopted Instagram due to its relative advantages over conventional media, such as fast information dissemination, two-way interaction capabilities, and ease of developing engaging content. The @rsudtanahabang account successfully increased public engagement in conveying health information. Interactive features like Instagram Feed, Stories, Reels, and Instagram Live strengthen the two-way interaction between the hospital and the public. Content on @rsudtanahabang is dynamically and regularly managed, following social media trends to ensure the information remains relevant and engaging. Instagram has proven to be a compatible tool for disseminating service-related information, such as doctor schedules, strategic health issues, treatment procedures, and health education. However, several challenges were identified and deemed necessary by the hospital, including (1) maintaining the consistency of information shared through Instagram. The hospital must ensure that the content published is always accurate, relevant, and adheres to medical protocols, and (2) managing negative comments responsively and professionally to preserve the hospital's reputation.

Keywords: Diffusion of Innovation; Health Communications; Hospital; Instagram; Social Media

Introduction

The use of social media has become an integral part of daily life for individuals, organizations, and professionals alike. The rapid development of communication technology drives this. Social media is significant in disseminating information and facilitating communication between various parties.

One of the most widely used social media platforms is Instagram. According to the Indonesian Digital Report, in January 2024, Instagram was Indonesia's second most-used social media platform, with 85.3% of the total social media (We Are Social Hootsuite, 2024). This places Instagram as a potential medium for delivering information to the broader public. Instagram is used for sharing photos and by various institutions, including hospitals, to disseminate health-related information and education. Many healthcare providers, including hospitals, doctors, and other health professionals, have adopted social media platforms, particularly Instagram.

Instagram is utilized to improve communication, disseminate health-related information, and foster connections with patients and the general public (Nurhakim & Fuad, 2024). Marshall McLuhan's theory of "the medium is the message" (1964) is highly relevant in healthcare services, where each medium has unique characteristics that influence how people interact. McLuhan argued that media not only deliver messages but also shape how they are received and interpreted by the audience. In health campaigns, social media can raise awareness and influence behavior, though long-term behavioral changes are often not evaluated (Ghahramani et al., 2022). Social media has become an essential tool in raising health awareness, motivating behavior change, and fostering stronger connections between healthcare organizations and the community (Rajshri & Malloy, 2023).

Previous research has shown that social media has significant potential for health promotion. Research by Maharani & Djuwita (2020) indicated that the Instagram account of the Semarang City Government was successful in its use as a public communication and information medium. Research by Al-Dmour et al. (2020) demonstrated that the use of social media platforms had a significant impact on health protection. Vionita & Prayoga (2021) revealed that Instagram was one of the most widely used social media platforms by hospitals in Tangerang Regency during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the crucial role of social media in health emergencies. Using Instagram as a strategy for public communication involves five stages: mapping the institution's image in the public eye, planning, gathering data to create content, distributing content via social media, and conducting evaluations (Diniati et al., 2023).

One of the government-owned hospitals in Indonesia that has utilized Instagram is the Tanah Abang Regional General Hospital (RSUD Tanah Abang). RSUD Tanah Abang uses Instagram for various purposes, including sharing content related to services, health information, and hospital activities, disseminating health information, promoting hospital services, and directly interacting with the public. Doctors and medical staff also share content focused on health promotion, service announcements, and raising public awareness about various health issues. This reflects a global trend where healthcare professionals are increasingly adopting social media for personal purposes, to share medical knowledge, communicate with patients, and promote healthcare services. Therefore, research on the benefits of using Instagram is worth exploring. This study will also explore the challenges hospitals face in utilizing Instagram.

The diffusion of innovation theory, introduced by Everett Rogers, is relevant for understanding how Instagram has been adopted as an innovation in healthcare services. This theory explains how an innovation, idea, or new technology is accepted and adopted by society. The diffusion process is influenced by factors such as the characteristics of the innovation itself, the communication channels used, time, and the social context (Littlejohn & Foss, 2022). The use of Instagram by RSUD Tanah Abang can be seen as a form of innovation adoption in healthcare services to increase patient engagement, disseminate health information more broadly, and strengthen the hospital's positive image. This study explores how RSUD Tanah Abang utilizes Instagram as part of its health communication strategy, the extent to which this platform benefits healthcare services and the challenges faced in adopting this innovation.

Theoretical Framework

New Media refers to digital communication that leverages information technology and the internet to create a dynamic and interactive environment. It includes various platforms such as social media, websites, mobile apps, podcasts, and video-on-demand. Examples of new media include Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and Twitter (X). New media is characterized by interactivity, personalization, accessibility, and the ability to share content in real time, making it more flexible and responsive to audience needs (Singha, 2024). A key feature of new media is its ability to turn users into prosumers—both producers and consumers of content—allowing them to shape discussions, influence decisions, and accelerate information spread, fostering a more participatory communication space (Lavorgna & Corda, 2024).

In healthcare, new media is often used to deliver educational information and health interventions through a broad digital channel. Social media platforms like Instagram significantly distribute interactive and informative content to the public (Naem, 2020). Social media platforms enable the

creation and sharing of diverse content, including information, opinions, and interests, in an easily accessible format for a broad audience. This characteristic allows hospitals and medical professionals to reach more people with messages tailored to the audience's needs (Naeem, 2020).

As one of the most popular social media platforms, Instagram offers various features that appeal to users. Core features like photo and video uploads allow users to share content from their gallery or camera and edit it with various effects. Users can also upload up to 10 photos or videos at once. Another popular feature is Instagram Stories, which are often used for promotional content with interactive tools like poll stickers and Ask Me Questions. Instagram Insights helps analyze the audience profile, including age, location, and interests. Additional features like live streaming (Live) enable users to interact with followers in real-time, while Direct Messages (DMs) facilitate private communication between users (Atmoko, 2022).

Other features like Captions, Comments, and Likes encourage interaction between users. Hashtags make searching for content based on specific themes more accessible, while Geotagging adds location information to posts. The Explore feature showcases popular content and posts liked by a user's followers. Additionally, Instagram offers creative tools such as Face Filters, Story Archives, Story Highlights, and Bookmarks, allowing users to save content for later viewing. IGTV, which allows long-form video uploads of up to an hour, enhances the user experience in sharing and enjoying video content on Instagram (Atmoko, 2022).

Social media platforms like Instagram allow individuals and institutions to share informative content quickly, directly, and engagingly. Instagram facilitates two-way communication, meaning users can receive information and interact directly with healthcare providers. This enables hospitals to share information about medical services and health education, promote events, and answer patient questions in real-time, enhancing engagement and building trust with their audience (Leaver et al., 2020).

Social media, such as Instagram, in the healthcare sector is a form of innovation in digital communication. In this context, Everett Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation theory provides a relevant framework for understanding how and why innovations like Instagram are adopted in healthcare services. The theory outlines the diffusion process of innovations through five key attributes: (1) Relative advantage, which refers to how much better the innovation is perceived compared to previous methods or technologies; (2) Compatibility, which refers to how well the innovation aligns with existing values, experiences, and needs within a society or organization; (3) Complexity, which refers to how easy or difficult the innovation is to use by adopters; (4) Trialability, which relates to how easily adopters can experiment with the innovation; and (5) Observability, which refers to how the success of the technology can be seen through engagement metrics (Littlejohn & Foss, 2022). The diffusion of communication technologies helps modernize society, taking it at least one step forward (Jan et al., 2020).

Material and Methodology

This study adopts a constructivist paradigm and employs a qualitative approach. Data collection methods include observing the Instagram account @rsudtanahabang to explore its use as an information medium for RSUD Tanah Abang. In addition to observation, in-depth interviews were conducted with three representatives from RSUD Tanah Abang (a public relations officer, a social media administrator, and a doctor), along with four Instagram followers of the hospital's account, who are also patients. The interviews aim to explore various stakeholders' perspectives on the benefits and challenges of using social media in the hospital setting.

The interview questions focus on three main aspects: (1) how the public relations team uses Instagram to interact with followers, patients, and the public; (2) the perceived benefits of using Instagram in the hospital's daily activities; and (3) the challenges faced in using the platform. For followers, questions revolve around their reasons for following @rsudtanahabang and their experiences interacting with the account.

As Creswell & Creswell (2018) described, the data analysis follows a reflective and ongoing approach. This process involves in-depth and continuous observation of the collected data, asking analytical questions, and making field notes throughout the research. The data is analyzed through coding, categorizing information based on predefined themes. The analysis model follows the interactive analysis framework from (Miles et al., 2014), allowing the researcher to evaluate and interpret data continuously throughout the research process. The data is analyzed through coding, where

information is categorized based on predefined themes. The analysis model follows the interactive analysis framework from (Miles et al., 2014), allowing the researcher to continuously evaluate and interpret data throughout the research process.

Data is analyzed by gathering comments from the hospital's Instagram account followers and observing their reactions, including both positive and negative responses to the presented information. Meaningful comments are documented using screenshots, while interview transcripts from Instagram interactions with selected users are further analyzed. All data from observations or interviews is organized with appropriate file names and coded according to relevant themes.

Data analysis follows the method outlined by (Miles et al., 2014), which includes four key stages: data reduction (this stage involves filtering, simplifying, and organizing the raw data collected from interviews and observations. The reduction process begins with determining the research focus and continues throughout data collection to identify and retain data relevant to the research objectives); data display (the reduced data is then presented in the form of narrative texts, matrices, graphs, or charts to help the researcher identify patterns and relationships) (Miles et al., 2014). The process also involves profound observation and reflective note-taking to enhance the accuracy of data interpretation.

Result and Discussion

The utilization of Instagram by RSUD Tanah Abang plays a vital role in health communication, particularly in reaching a broader audience in a more interactive and digitally relevant manner. RSUD Tanah Abang has been using Instagram as a platform for health service information and promotion since 2018, actively promoting services, conducting health education, and utilizing it as a communication tool. The features employed include (1) feed posts, (2) Instagram Stories, (3) Instagram Highlights, (4) Reels, and (5) Instagram Live.

Feed posts are used by RSUD Tanah Abang to convey important information regarding the hospital to its followers. The @rsudtanahabang account regularly posts updates about available medical services, such as doctor schedules, specialist services, patient registration procedures, and other healthcare facilities. This information is designed with visually appealing and easily understandable content to ensure that messages are communicated to the audience, including the general public, who may need these services.

Each feed post is accompanied by a short but informative caption that explains the post's content. These captions provide additional context, highlight the benefits of the information being shared, and encourage further interaction from the audience. In addition, hashtags such as #RSUDTanahAbang, #Ramah, #Modern, and #Berkualitas facilitate content discovery and increase post reach. The use of hashtags can also attract more followers. As described in research by Afryantono et al. (2022), Instagram is a primary platform for promotional activities, utilizing the Explore feature to expand reach by optimizing hashtag usage. Feed posts also serve as a promotional medium to inform the public about special programs or events held by RSUD Tanah Abang, such as blood drives, free health check-ups, or health webinars. These promotions are often enhanced with attractive visuals and clear call-to-actions, encouraging the audience to participate.

The @rsudtanahabang account also interacts with its followers through the comments section of feed posts. The social media team actively responds to questions, engages with comments, and provides additional information when needed. This interaction strengthens relationships with the audience and builds a responsive and caring image for the hospital. Figure 1 illustrates the use of feed posts. It shows a health education post about the benefits of physiotherapy, one of RSUD Tanah Abang's services.

The post explains the benefits of physiotherapy in detail and provides information on service schedules at RSUD Tanah Abang. The caption in this post is brief but remains relevant and aligned with the information being conveyed. In addition to delivering information, the post also persuades the public to visit the hospital for treatment. From the interaction data in Figure 1, it is clear that the content successfully attracted the audience's attention, as indicated by 99 likes, 19 comments, and 32 shares. The number of likes reflects the audience's appreciation and interest in the content. The more likes a post receives, the stronger the indication that the post is relevant, engaging, or beneficial to the audience. This also reflects the positive image built by the @rsudtanahabang account in the eyes of the public.



Figure 1. One of the posts on @rsudtanahabang
Source: Instagram @rsudtanahabang

The comments indicate that the content captures attention and stimulates responses or discussions from the audience. Engagement on Instagram is crucial as it reflects active interaction, provides direct feedback for RSUD Tanah Abang regarding the information they share, and builds closer relationships with the community.

Instagram Stories is a feature that allows users to share temporary content that lasts 24 hours. It includes interactive media such as polls, questions, stickers, and replies that direct users to direct messages (DMs), allowing the hospital to interact directly with its followers. RSUD Tanah Abang uses Instagram Stories to communicate urgent or temporary information, such as updates on available service schedules or emergency announcements. A primary use of Instagram Stories is to notify about changes in specialist doctor schedules, providing quick and precise updates to help patients adjust their appointments accordingly.

The highlight feature saves essential stories, like service schedules or health guides, allowing information from expired Stories to be saved and categorized for easy access anytime. RSUD Tanah Abang uses highlights to store service schedules, service guides, and promotions for premium health check packages, ensuring that crucial information remains accessible to followers. Reels convey health messages more engagingly, such as moving infographics, animations, or short video clips that summarize important information. An interview revealed:

We try our best to keep up with the latest trends on Instagram. For example, we are using Reels more frequently to present health information in a way that is more interesting and easily digestible for the public. (Interview with W, PR of RSUD Tanah Abang, July 2024).

Instagram Live is utilized for live Q&A sessions with medical experts, health webinars, and live discussions with specialists. This feature allows the hospital to deliver real-time information and answer community questions, fostering trust through direct two-way communication. As mentioned in the interview:

We have hosted IG Live events on health services with specialist doctors. (Interview with W, PR of RSUD Tanah Abang, July 2024).

This data shows that RSUD Tanah Abang can deliver health information in an informative and engaging manner, aligned with current digital trends, using Instagram features such as feed posts, stories, highlights, reels, and live.

The use of Instagram as an information medium by RSUD Tanah Abang through its account @rsudtanahabang can be analyzed using Everett Rogers' diffusion of innovation theory. The diffusion of innovation theory explains how an innovation, whether it is technology, an idea, or a new practice, can be accepted and adopted because it has relative advantages such as (1) reaching a wide audience, (2) providing up-to-date and relevant information in real-time; (3) facilitating interaction and engagement with two-way communication; and (4) aligning with audience behavior. This aligns with

research by Khan & Loh (2022), which emphasizes the role of social media as a platform for sharing knowledge, facilitating discussions, and staying informed, proving its effectiveness as a tool for healthcare professionals.

The PR staff at RSUD Tanah Abang stated that using Instagram as a communication medium is a strategic move to engage the hospital with the public. Unlike traditional media, such as brochures or flyers with limited reach, Instagram is a more efficient way to deliver health information, education, and service promotions. With interactive features like comments, likes, and direct messaging, Instagram opens a dialogue that extends the reach of information and strengthens public engagement. This helps the hospital listen to and respond to patient and community needs in real time, fostering closer and more transparent relationships. Therefore, Instagram serves as a promotional tool and a communication channel supporting more responsive and modern public service.

RSUD Tanah Abang uses Instagram as a primary platform to deliver real-time, vital health service information. Instagram enables the hospital to reach its followers directly, spreading important announcements efficiently. Content such as doctor schedules, service updates, vaccination schedules, and COVID-19-related information can be uploaded in minutes and accessed by thousands of followers immediately. This positions Instagram as a dynamic and responsive communication channel, overcoming the limitations of traditional media that take longer to distribute information.

The availability of timely information on Instagram also helps RSUD Tanah Abang ensure that patients and the public receive accurate and relevant data, reducing the risk of misinformation. Moreover, the notification feature ensures that followers are instantly updated, helping them stay informed about critical health service updates. With this approach, RSUD Tanah Abang maintains transparency, accelerates information delivery, and builds public trust, which is essential in improving healthcare service quality.

Interactive features like comments and direct messages enable the hospital to engage directly with patients and gain valuable feedback. The @rsudtanahabang Instagram account successfully created active engagement with its audience, mainly through educational content like posts about physiotherapy services. These posts attracted attention and encouraged active interaction, reflected in the significant number of likes, comments, and shares.

The educational post about physiotherapy services on @rsudtanahabang attracted audience interest because the content was relevant and provided the necessary information. Information such as the benefits of physiotherapy, the procedures offered, and who would benefit from the service answered the audience's need for specific healthcare knowledge. Such educational content also demonstrated RSUD Tanah Abang's commitment to providing healthcare education that could enhance the quality of life for the community.

This post received a high number of likes, indicating that the audience appreciated the information. Likes are a spontaneous form of appreciation that shows the content successfully captured followers' attention and was deemed attractive. This also proves that the message was effectively delivered to the target audience.

The comments on the post show a deeper level of audience participation. Comments included questions, testimonials, or reactions to the content posted. This indicates that the audience felt engaged and interested in interacting further with @rsudtanahabang. Some comments asked about the registration procedure for physiotherapy services or shared patient testimonials of those who had used the service. This interaction also allowed the hospital to get closer to its audience and respond in ways that strengthened the relationship with the community. This aligns with the statement that social media can facilitate direct, real-time, and personal interactions between individuals and organizations (Scott, 2020).

The high number of shares suggests that the content was considered valuable enough to be shared with others. When the audience shares the educational post about physiotherapy services with their networks, whether through direct messages or stories, it indicates that the content has broader appeal and benefits, further enhancing the visibility of RSUD Tanah Abang in the community at no additional cost. RSUD Tanah Abang's decision to actively use Instagram stems from the fact that the public now frequently seeks information through social media. Instagram allows the hospital to present information in a visually appealing, easy-to-understand format, making it more aligned with the preferences of younger audiences.

RSUD Tanah Abang recognizes that young and active social media users tend to respond more to information disseminated through platforms like Instagram. Therefore, utilizing Instagram to share

health information and interact with the public is an appropriate and fitting strategy given the current habits of their audience. This is in line with the statement of Vionita & Prayoga (2021), who emphasized that social media platforms, including Instagram, can be used by health authorities, such as hospitals, to raise public health awareness. With the available features, social media enables hospitals to disseminate health information, receive feedback from patients, and interact directly with their audience, thus improving service quality and overall health awareness.

RSUD Tanah Abang also promotes various health services, such as specialist clinics, new facilities, and health activities organized by the hospital. Attractive visuals can increase public awareness of the services offered. This aligns with the study by Aprilina, (2021), which stated that social media can influence an individual's healthy lifestyle behavior based on the information they receive, ultimately shaping their intentions and actions in their communication on these platforms. This can increase public participation in the services and activities provided by RSUD.

The relative advantage in the diffusion of innovation from Instagram usage at RSUD Tanah Abang lies in more direct patient interaction, the ability to disseminate information faster, and a platform that supports attractive visual content, which can enhance patient and public engagement. Instagram is compatible with the hospital's need to establish more personal and effective communication with its audience, in line with digitalization trends and increasing media literacy in society. In addition to its compatibility, Instagram is relatively easy to use for RSUD, both for healthcare institutions and the general audience, due to its user-friendly interface and features that do not require high technical skills. In terms of triability (ease of trial), the hospital implemented it by starting small campaigns and specific content on Instagram since 2018 to gauge public response. Since 2020, RSUD Tanah Abang has actively developed a broader social media strategy.

Based on the results of interviews and observations, the benefits of using Instagram as a social media platform at RSUD Tanah Abang are apparent; however, several challenges are faced in its implementation as a communication and information dissemination tool. According to the results of the interviews and observations of the Instagram account @rsudtanahabang, various challenges that frequently arise and are considered necessary by the hospital regarding the use of Instagram include: 1) Maintaining consistency of the information presented on Instagram is a unique challenge. The hospital must ensure that the content published is always accurate, relevant, and compliant with medical protocols, which requires good coordination between departments, 2) The hospital often receives negative feedback or complaints through Instagram. Managing negative comments and addressing patient complaints responsively and professionally is a challenge that needs to be addressed to maintain the hospital's reputation.

Conclusions

RSUD Tanah Abang has adopted Instagram as a platform that offers relative advantages compared to conventional media, such as rapid information dissemination, the ability for two-way interaction, and the ease of developing engaging visual messages or content. The Instagram account @rsudtanahabang has successfully increased community engagement and delivered health information in a more effective and appealing manner. Interactive features such as Instagram feed, stories, reels, and Instagram Live enhance the two-way interaction between RSUD and the community. The content presented on @rsudtanahabang is managed dynamically and periodically, following social media trends to keep the information relevant and attractive to the audience. Instagram is a compatible tool for disseminating information related to available services, doctor schedules, strategic health issues, treatment procedures, and health education.

In addition to the benefits, various challenges often arise and are considered necessary by the hospital regarding the use of Instagram. These include: (1) maintaining the consistency of the information conveyed through Instagram. The hospital must ensure that the content published is always accurate, relevant, and compliant with medical protocols, which requires good coordination between departments; (2) RSUD needs to manage negative comments and handle patient complaints responsively and professionally, which is a challenge that must be addressed to maintain the hospital's reputation

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