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UTILIZATION OF DOCUMENTARY FILMS AS INFORMATION MEDIA FOR PROFILES AND EXPERTISE COMPETENCIES

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the utilization of documentary films as an information medium in presenting the profile and professional competencies of an educational institution. Documentary films, as audio-visual media, possess the strength to deliver factual, persuasive, and educational information by integrating visual elements, narration, sound, and authentic testimonials. This research employs a descriptive qualitative method with data collection techniques including observation, interviews, and documentation. The research subjects involve institutional representatives and audiences who viewed the documentary film. The findings indicate that documentary films are effective in enhancing audience understanding of the institution's profile and areas of expertise. The structured and fact-based presentation of information helps build credibility and strengthen the institution's positive public image. Furthermore, the engaging audio-visual elements increase audience interest and involvement in receiving the conveyed messages. This study concludes that documentary films can serve as a strategic and relevant information medium in institutional communication, particularly in efforts to build image, enhance reputation, and broaden public outreach.

Keywords: *Documentary film, information media, institutional profile, professional competence, audio-visual communication.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pemanfaatan film dokumenter sebagai media informasi dalam menyampaikan profil dan kompetensi keahlian suatu lembaga atau instansi pendidikan. Film dokumenter sebagai media audio-visual memiliki kekuatan dalam menyajikan informasi secara faktual, persuasif, dan edukatif karena mampu memadukan unsur visual, narasi, suara, serta testimoni yang autentik. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Subjek penelitian melibatkan pihak institusi serta audiens yang menyaksikan film dokumenter tersebut. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa film dokumenter efektif dalam meningkatkan pemahaman audiens mengenai profil institusi dan kompetensi keahlian yang dimiliki. Penyajian informasi yang sistematis dan berbasis fakta mampu membangun kepercayaan serta memperkuat citra positif lembaga di mata publik. Selain itu, penggunaan elemen audio-visual yang menarik dapat meningkatkan daya tarik serta keterlibatan audiens dalam menerima pesan yang disampaikan. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa film dokumenter dapat menjadi media informasi yang strategis dan relevan dalam komunikasi institusional, khususnya dalam upaya membangun citra, meningkatkan reputasi, serta memperluas jangkauan informasi kepada masyarakat.

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Kata kunci: Film dokumenter, media informasi, profil institusi, kompetensi keahlian, komunikasi audio-visual

I. INTRODUCTION

The development of digital communication technology has transformed the way society accesses and consumes information. The shift from conventional text-based media to audio-visual media has become a global phenomenon affecting various sectors, including education and institutional communication. Audio-visual media is better able to capture audience attention because it synergistically combines elements of image, sound, and narrative, which can increase understanding and interest in the message (Anugerah et al., 2023). Documentary films are a form of audio-visual media that offer a representation of factual reality through a systematic visual narrative.

This medium is often used in educational contexts, cultural preservation, and social advocacy due to its ability to present real-life images in depth and authenticity (Putra et al., 2025). Conveying information about an institution's profile and its expertise is crucial for building public image and trust. Effectively conveying information can strengthen an institution's reputation and competitiveness amidst increasingly fierce competition in the world of education and training. However, text-only information is often less engaging and less effective in influencing audience perceptions.

Audio-visual media in the learning process has proven effective in increasing conceptual understanding and audience engagement. For example, research on the use of documentary media in history learning shows that films can increase student motivation and understanding of the material presented (Yafi & Aria Yuliantri, 2024). Documentary-based audio-visual media are not only effective as learning media but can also increase audience motivation and engagement in a broader informational context (Shivani et al., 2025). Documentary media demonstrates that documentary content, produced with the right approach, has great potential to educate and convey important information to the public, especially in the digital era where access to information is increasingly rapid and open (Gurning et al., 2024).

However, the strategic use of documentary films as an informational medium to convey an institution's profile and expertise remains under-researched, particularly in the context of institutional communication in Indonesia. Most research focuses on the use of documentary

films as a learning tool in specific subjects, rather than as an informative and promotional medium for institutional communication. The main problem in this research is how documentary films can be effectively utilized as an informational medium to portray an institution's profile and expertise. This research also aims to determine the extent to which such media can influence audience understanding and perceptions of the institution. The use of documentary films as an information medium can strengthen institutional communication messages through greater audio-visual appeal than static text.

Furthermore, documentaries also have the potential to convey a positive image through authentic visual representation and strong narratives. This is crucial for educational institutions seeking to increase visibility and differentiation in the digital age. The researcher's curiosity was driven by the fact that many educational institutions have produced audio-visual content, but not all have maximized systematic documentary narratives to effectively convey their profile and expertise to the public. Documentaries have the capacity to create a profound emotional experience for audiences. This element can influence their perceptions and the way they form an image of the institution in question.

As an information medium, documentaries not only convey factual information but also instill substantive educational and persuasive values. These elements can strengthen the credibility of the message and increase audience cognitive and affective engagement. There is a gap between studies of audio-visual media that focus on learning and the development of documentary-based institutional communication media. Thus, this research contributes to the development of institutional communication theory and practice in the digital age.

II. THEORETICAL STUDIES

Documentary Films

A documentary film is an audio-visual work that presents reality based on facts, actual data, and in-depth research with the aim of providing information, education, and documentation of an event or social phenomenon. Documentaries do not simply record events but also construct reality through a systematic narrative structure so that it can be understood contextually by the audience. According to Bill Nichols (2020), documentaries represent the historical world through a creative approach that remains grounded in facts, thus possessing both informative and interpretive dimensions.

The main characteristics of documentary films include relative objectivity, research-based storytelling, the use of authentic data, and informative and argumentative narratives. Documentaries also often utilize interviews, direct observation, visual archives, and voice-overs as tools for conveying messages. Over time, documentaries have become more than just a medium for information, but also a persuasive medium capable of shaping public opinion through a strong narrative approach (Corner, 2020).

From the perspective of media representation theory, documentaries are never completely neutral because the reality they portray is the result of the filmmaker's selection, framing, and construction. Paul Ward (2021) explains that documentaries create meaning through structured visual and audio construction, allowing audiences to perceive a reality mediated by the creator's perspective. Thus, documentaries not only reflect reality but also shape how they perceive it.

Developments in digital technology between 2020 and 2025 have influenced the form and distribution of documentary films. Digital platforms and social media enable documentaries to reach a wider and more diverse audience. Recent studies show that digital documentaries have significant potential for building engagement due to their ability to integrate interactive elements and multi-platform storytelling (Nash, 2022).

Furthermore, contemporary documentaries are increasingly adopting a more aesthetic cinematic approach without compromising their factual value. This approach makes documentaries more visually and emotionally engaging, making them effective as a medium for public and institutional communication (Bruzzi, 2023). Aesthetic elements combined with factual data strengthen persuasiveness and enhance the credibility of the message.

Documentaries can be used as a strategic information medium to convey an institution's profile, vision, mission, and expertise. The power of concrete visualizations and direct testimonials allows audiences to gain a more concrete picture than text-based presentations alone. This aligns with recent research findings showing that documentary-based audio-visual media significantly improves audience comprehension and information retention (Mayer, 2020; Sari & Prasetyo, 2024).

Thus, documentaries function not only as documentation of reality but also as communication instruments capable of building image, credibility, and public perception. Within the framework of this research, documentaries are understood as information media

that present the profile and expertise of an institution factually, systematically, and persuasively through well-planned audio-visual construction.

Information Media

Information media is a means used to convey messages, data, and knowledge to the public in a systematic and structured manner. Information media is no longer limited to print but has evolved into the digital realm, enabling rapid, widespread, and interactive distribution of messages. This transformation is influenced by media convergence and the development of internet-based communication technologies, which expand the accessibility of information (Flew & Smith, 2021).

Information media has the primary function of conveying messages (informative), shaping opinions (persuasive), and educating (educational). The effectiveness of information media is greatly influenced by the presentation format, message clarity, and suitability to audience characteristics. In the context of educational institutions, information media plays a role in introducing identities, programs, and superior competencies to the public.

According to digital communication theory, media effectiveness is largely determined by the level of audience engagement with the content presented (Couldry & Hepp, 2020). Visual and interactive media tend to generate higher engagement than solely text-based media. This explains why many institutions have begun to utilize video content, including documentaries, as strategic information media.

The development of digital information media also demands credibility and accuracy of messages. The information conveyed must be data-based and verifiable to avoid misinformation. In this context, documentaries have an advantage because they prioritize facts, research, and authentic visual evidence. Therefore, documentaries can be categorized as information media with high credibility if produced professionally and ethically.

Audio-Visual Communication

Audio-visual communication is the process of conveying messages that combines sound (audio) and images (visual) in a single medium. The combination of these two elements allows for a more comprehensive and easily understood message. The multimedia learning theory proposed by Richard E. Mayer (2020) explains that individuals process information through two main channels: visual and verbal, so integrating the two can improve comprehension and retention.

In practice, audio-visual communication not only conveys facts but also creates an emotional experience for the audience. Elements such as background music, narrative intonation, image composition, and editing techniques play a role in shaping the audience's perceptions and affective responses. Recent studies have shown that narratively designed video content can increase audience retention and engagement compared to non-narrative content (Sundar, 2022).

Audiovisual communication is also related to the theory of the social construction of reality, where messages conveyed through media can influence how audiences understand a phenomenon. Documentaries, as audiovisual communication products, have the ability to frame reality through the choice of perspective, narrative structure, and image editing. Therefore, the effectiveness of audiovisual communication is greatly influenced by production quality and the consistency of the message conveyed.

Audiovisual communication serves as a means of building image and reputation through authentic visual representation. Conveying profiles and expertise in documentary form allows audiences to directly observe activities, facilities, and testimonials that support the institution's credibility.

Institutional Image and Reputation

Institutional image is the public's perception or picture of an organization based on experiences, information, and communications received. Reputation, on the other hand, is a long-term evaluation formed from the consistency of an institution's performance and communications. In modern marketing management theory, image and reputation are strategic assets that influence public trust and decisions (Kotler & Keller, 2022).

Institutional image is built through consistent and credible communication. The media used to convey information plays a crucial role in shaping public perception. Authentic, fact-based audio-visual content can strengthen a positive image by presenting concrete evidence that can be verified by the audience.

Recent research shows that the reputation of educational institutions is significantly influenced by effective digital communication strategies (Alwi & Kitchen, 2021). The use of institutional video media, including profile documentaries, has been shown to enhance perceptions of the institution's quality and professionalism.

Documentaries are seen as a strategic instrument for building the image and reputation of educational institutions by conveying profiles and expertise in a factual, persuasive, and transparent manner. Strong visual representation and systematic narrative enable the public to obtain a comprehensive picture of an institution's identity and excellence.

Therefore, the integration of information media, audio-visual communication, and strategies for building an institution's image and reputation forms the theoretical basis for this research. Documentary films are positioned as a strategic communication medium that not only conveys information but also sustainably shapes public perception and trust.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a constructivist paradigm, aiming to deeply understand how the use of documentary films as a medium for information on profiles and expertise competencies is interpreted, produced, and received by audiences within the context of educational institutions. A qualitative approach was chosen to comprehensively explore the meanings, perceptions, and experiences of research subjects in natural settings. Qualitative research focuses on exploring and understanding the meanings individuals or groups attach to a social phenomenon (Creswell, 2020). Accordingly, qualitative methods are used to examine objects in natural settings, with the researcher as the key instrument in data collection and analysis (Sugiyono, 2017).

This type of research is descriptive qualitative, as it aims to systematically and factually describe the use of documentary films as an information medium in the Communication Studies Program at BSI University. The research was conducted within the Communication Studies Program at BSI University, involving lecturers involved in the production or utilization of documentary films, students who have watched the documentaries, and program administrators as supporting informants. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, based on considerations of relevance and direct involvement with the research subjects.

The data used in this study consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews, direct observation of documentary film use, and documentation in the form of video archives and other supporting documents. The interviews were conducted semi-structured to allow researchers to gain in-depth information regarding the production process, message delivery strategies, and audience perceptions of documentary films. Observations were conducted to understand the context in which this

medium is used in academic and institutional activities. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained through literature review, including books, scientific journals, and official documents relevant to the research topic.

Data analysis was conducted interactively and continuously throughout the research process. The analytical model used refers to the concepts proposed by Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, which include data reduction, data presentation, conclusion drawing, and verification. Data reduction involves sorting and focusing information relevant to the research objectives. Data presentation is presented in descriptive narrative form to facilitate interpretation, while conclusions are drawn gradually by verifying findings through source and method triangulation techniques.

In this study, the researcher acted as the primary instrument, directly involved in the data collection, interpretation, and analysis. Therefore, researchers must maintain objectivity and sensitivity to the social context under study. To ensure data validity, this study employed triangulation techniques by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation. Furthermore, this study upheld research ethics by ensuring that informant participation was voluntary and that the identities and data obtained were kept confidential.

Through this qualitative approach, the research is expected to provide a deeper understanding of how documentary films are utilized as a medium for information on profiles and expertise competencies, and how this medium shapes perceptions, understanding, and the institutional image among audiences within the context of the Communication Studies Program at BSI University.

IV. RESEARCH RESULTS

RESULTS

This study analyzes the use of documentary films as a medium for conveying information about the profile and expertise of the Communication Studies Program at BSI University. Based on observations and in-depth interviews, documentary films are utilized as a strategic medium to convey information about the institution's profile, academic activities, learning facilities, and student expertise in a visual, systematic, and persuasive manner.

Conceptually, this finding aligns with Bill Nichols' (2020) view that documentaries represent reality constructed through fact-based visual and audio construction. The

documentaries in this study not only present institutional data but also directly depict the reality of academic activities.

Use of Documentary Films as a Medium for Information

Interviews with three lecturers indicate that documentary films are considered more effective than conventional information media.

The first lecturer stated:

> *"Documentaries make the delivery of information more vivid. Audiences can directly see the learning process, laboratory practices, and student work, making the information feel real and convincing."* (Interview with Lecturer 1, 2026)

He also added:

> *"When prospective students only read brochures or see posters, they don't necessarily understand the actual academic atmosphere. However, through documentaries, they can experience the campus atmosphere, the interactions between lecturers and students, and the available facilities."* (Interview with Lecturer 1, 2026)

A second lecturer added:

> *"As an information medium, documentaries are very helpful in explaining expertise. Visualizing broadcasting, public relations, and media production practices provides a concrete picture to prospective students."* (Interview with Lecturer 2, 2026)

He further explained:

> *"Visuals have a strong persuasive power. Documentaries allow us to show the process, not just the end result. This makes the information more transparent and easier to understand."* (Interview with Lecturer 2, 2026)

Meanwhile, a third lecturer emphasized the aspect of credibility:

> *"Through documentaries, we don't just make claims, but also show concrete evidence. This is important for building public trust in the quality of the study program."* (Interview with Lecturer 3, 2026)

He also added:

> *"Public trust is built when there is a match between narrative and reality. Documentaries present student testimonials, footage of academic activities, and direct program achievements, thereby enhancing the institution's legitimacy."* (Interview with Lecturer 3, 2026)

The lecturers' statements demonstrate the representational power of documentaries, as explained by Paul Ward (2021), who argues that documentaries construct meaning through organized visual and narrative structures, thereby shaping specific perceptions in the audience. Thus, documentaries function not only as a medium for conveying information but also as an instrument for constructing image, credibility, and symbolic experiences that strengthen the program's appeal in the public eye.

Using Documentary Films as an Informational Medium

Interviews with three lecturers indicate that documentary films are considered more effective than conventional informational media.

The first lecturer stated:

> *"Documentaries make the delivery of information more vivid. Audiences can directly see the learning process, laboratory practices, and student work, making the information feel real and convincing."* (Interview with Lecturer 1, 2026)

He also added:

> *"Through structured visuals and narrative, documentaries are able to create an experience that almost resembles a direct visit to campus. This cannot be achieved through text or photos alone."* (Interview with Lecturer 1, 2026)

The second lecturer added:

> *"As an informational medium, documentaries are very helpful in explaining expertise. Visualizing broadcasting, public relations, and media production practices provides a concrete picture to prospective students."* (Interview with Lecturer 2, 2026)

He further explained:

> *"Prospective students often need a concrete picture of what they will learn. With documentaries, they can see the production process in the studio, PR event simulations, and field coverage activities firsthand."* (Interview with Lecturer 2, 2026)

Meanwhile, a third lecturer emphasized the credibility aspect:

> *"Through documentaries, we don't just make claims, but also show concrete evidence. This is important to build public trust in the quality of the study program."* (Interview with Lecturer 3, 2026)

He also said:

> *"When information is visualized in the form of documentation of real activities and student testimonials, the public will be more trusting because they see facts, not just promotions."* (Interview with Lecturer 3, 2026)

Furthermore, a third lecturer added the strategic aspect of media:

> *"In the digital age, people are more interested in audiovisual content. Documentaries are a relevant communication strategy because they can reach a wider audience through social media and digital platforms."* (Interview with Lecturer 3, 2026)

The lecturers' statements demonstrate the representational power of documentaries, as explained by Paul Ward (2021), who argues that documentaries construct meaning through organized visual structures and narratives, thereby shaping certain perceptions in the audience. Thus, documentaries not only serve as a medium for conveying information, but also as a means of building an institutional image, strengthening credibility, and providing a communication strategy that adapts to the development of digital media.

Student Perceptions of Documentary Films

In addition to lecturers, this study also involved two students as informants to determine the effectiveness of documentaries from the perspective of internal audiences.

The first student stated:

> *"After watching the study program profile documentary, I better understand the competencies I will be learning, especially media production practices and communication management."* (Student Interview 1, 2026)

He also added:

> *"The visual explanations helped me grasp the information more quickly than reading descriptions on the website. I could see the production workflow and the roles of each team directly."* (Student Interview 1, 2026)

He further explained:

> *"The documentary also featured testimonials from students and lecturers, so I felt I received a more honest and realistic picture of college life."* (Student Interview 1, 2026)

A second student added:

> *"The documentary made me more confident in my choice of study program. I was able to see firsthand the actual facilities and activities that I had previously only read about in brochures."* (Student Interview 2, 2026)

He also said:

> "The classroom atmosphere, studios, and practical activities presented made me feel like I was familiar with the campus environment before actually entering. That helped me in making my decision." (Student Interview 2, 2026)

Furthermore, the second student emphasized the motivational aspect:

> *"Seeing the students' work featured in the documentary motivated me to produce the same or even better work."* (Student Interview 2, 2026)

These quotes demonstrate that documentaries serve not only as an information medium but also as a means of education, building positive perceptions, and strengthening students' academic decisions. Documentaries can provide an informative and persuasive visual experience, thereby increasing the understanding, confidence, and motivation of prospective and current students towards the study program.

Documentary Films in Image and Reputation Building

Research results show that documentaries play a role in building a positive institutional image. The visualization of modern facilities, active academic activities, and student achievements creates a perception of professionalism and competence in the public eye.

The first lecturer reiterated:

> *"The institutional image becomes stronger because the documentary displays the study program's identity in a comprehensive and structured manner."* (Interview with Lecturer 1, 2026)

He also added:

> *"This identity is not only visible in the logo or slogan, but in the actual activities displayed, from the learning process to student work. That's what builds a professional impression."* (Interview with Lecturer 1, 2026)

The second lecturer stated:

> *"In the digital era, audio-visual media such as documentaries are much more relevant for building reputation than print media."* (Interview with Lecturer 2, 2026)

He further explained:

> *"Reputation isn't built overnight, but through consistent messaging and visual evidence. Documentaries allow institutions to demonstrate their quality openly and transparently."* (Interview with Lecturer 2, 2026)

He also added:

> *"When documentaries are shared through social media and digital platforms, their reach is broader. This strengthens the study program's positioning amidst competition between universities."* (Interview with Lecturer 2, 2026)

The second student also stated:

> *"I think documentaries make the study program look more professional and competitive."* (Student Interview 2, 2026)

He added:

> *"The neat visual presentation, clear narrative, and documentation of activities make me feel like this study program has high standards."* (Student Interview 2, 2026)

Furthermore, the first student expressed:

> (Student Interview 1, 2026)

These quotes demonstrate that documentaries function not only as an information medium but also as a strategic instrument in shaping the institution's image and reputation. Through structured, consistent, and authentic visual representation, documentaries can build perceptions of professionalism, credibility, and competitiveness of study programs in the eyes of the public and internal students.

DISCUSSION

Based on the overall research findings, the use of documentaries as a medium for profile information and expertise competencies plays a significant role in higher education institutions' communication. Interviews with lecturers and students indicate that documentaries not only convey information but also build understanding, confidence, and positive perceptions of study programs. Conceptually, a documentary is a form of audio-visual communication that represents reality through an organized visual structure and

narrative. According to Paul Ward (2021), documentaries construct meaning through image selection, storyline, and narrative construction, which shape the audience's perception of reality. The realities represented include academic activities, facilities, and study program expertise.

From an informative perspective, documentaries have proven capable of conveying institutional profiles and expertise in a factual and comprehensive manner. Visualizations of laboratory practices, media production, and documentation of academic activities provide concrete evidence of the ongoing learning process. This aligns with Bill Nichols' (2020) view that documentaries have a representational character, depicting social reality through visual evidence and narrative argumentation. In this study, this visual evidence strengthens the credibility of the information because the audience can directly observe the activities depicted, rather than simply reading written descriptions as in brochures or print media.

The educational function of documentaries is evident in their ability to provide concrete understanding of the learning process and expertise practice. Students, as the internal audience, stated that documentaries helped them understand the production process, communication management, and the dynamics of academic activities more clearly. In educational communication studies, audiovisual media is considered effective because it simultaneously incorporates visual and auditory elements, thereby enhancing information absorption. The use of audiovisual media in learning improves conceptual understanding and information retention compared to solely text-based media. This finding is relevant to the results of this study, where documentaries provide an indirect learning experience that strengthens students' understanding of study program competencies.

The persuasiveness of documentaries is evident in their ability to build an institution's image and reputation. Visualizations of modern facilities, active academic activities, and student and faculty testimonials foster perceptions of professionalism, credibility, and competitiveness. In the context of strategic communication in higher education, an institution's image is built through consistent messaging and authentic visual representation. A study in the Public Relations Review (2022) confirmed that digital audiovisual content has a significant influence on shaping an organization's reputation because it can present both emotional and factual narratives. Thus, documentaries function not only as an

information medium but also as a strategic institutional branding instrument in the digital era.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the research results and discussion outlined above, it can be concluded that the use of documentary films as a medium for information on profiles and expertise competencies plays an effective and strategic role in the context of higher education communication. Documentaries serve not only as a means of conveying information but also as a medium for representing academic reality, capable of presenting concrete images of the learning process, facilities, and student achievements.

Substantively, this study identified three main functions of documentary films: the informative function, which conveys study program profiles and expertise competencies factually, transparently, and based on visual evidence. The educational function, which provides the audience with a deeper understanding of the learning process and expertise practices through systematic audio-visual presentations. The persuasive function, which builds a positive image, credibility, and reputation of the institution through professional and structured visual representations.

These findings demonstrate that documentary films can shape audience perceptions, both faculty and students, regarding the quality and identity of study programs. Thus, documentaries serve not only as a documentation medium but also as a strategic communication instrument for strengthening the image and competitiveness of higher education institutions in the digital era.

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