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SCIENTIFIC COMMUNICATION AND UNIVERSITY OUTREACH ON INSTAGRAM: AN EXPERIENCE REPORT ON THE DISSEMINATION OF SELECTION PROCESSES IN A GRADUATE PROGRAM IN ANIMAL SCIENCE – UFGD

COMUNICAÇÃO CIENTÍFICA E EXTENSÃO UNIVERSITÁRIA NO INSTAGRAM: RELATO DE EXPERIÊNCIA NA DIVULGAÇÃO DE PROCESSOS SELETIVOS DE UM PROGRAMA DE PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO EM ZOOTECNIA- UFGD

COMUNICACIÓN CIENTÍFICA Y EXTENSIÓN UNIVERSITARIA EN INSTAGRAM: RELATO DE EXPERIENCIA EN LA DIFUSIÓN DE PROCESOS DE SELECCIÓN DE UN PROGRAMA DE POSGRADO EN ZOOTECNIA- UFGD

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Abstract: This study reports an extension experience, with a qualitative and descriptive approach, on the use of Instagram as an institutional communication and science outreach

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strategy at the Graduate Program in Animal Science (Zootecnia) of the Federal University of Grande Dourados (PPGZ/UFGD). Actions were implemented during four consecutive admission calls (PS-2024/2, PS-2025/1, PS-2025/2 and PS-2026/1) through systematic Instagram Stories posts using accessible language, standardized visual elements and student tagging to enhance organic reach. Performance was assessed using Instagram Insights indicators, including views, interactions and engagement rate, as well as audience profiling. Metrics varied across cycles, with an overall increase in total interactions and qualitative engagement over time, suggesting maturation of communication strategies and stronger institutional visibility. These findings highlight the potential of social media as a university extension tool, supporting the democratization of admission information and strengthening university–society connections.

Keywords: Institutional communication; Science communication; Engagement; Instagram; Graduate studies

Resumo: Este estudo apresenta um relato de experiência extensionista, de abordagem qualitativa e natureza descritiva, sobre o uso do Instagram como estratégia de comunicação institucional e divulgação científica no Programa de Pós-Graduação em Zootecnia da Universidade Federal da Grande Dourados (PPGZ/UFGD). As ações foram realizadas durante a divulgação de quatro processos seletivos consecutivos (PS-2024/2, PS-2025/1, PS-2025/2 e PS-2026/1), com publicações sistemáticas nos stories, utilizando linguagem acessível, elementos visuais padronizados e marcação de discentes para ampliar o alcance orgânico. A avaliação foi conduzida por meio de indicadores do Instagram Insights, considerando visualizações, interações e taxa de engajamento, além da caracterização do público alcançado. Observou-se variação entre os ciclos, com aumento das interações totais e do engajamento qualitativo ao longo do tempo, indicando maturação das estratégias comunicacionais e fortalecimento da visibilidade institucional. Os resultados reforçam o potencial das redes sociais como ferramenta de extensão universitária, contribuindo para democratizar informações sobre processos seletivos e aproximar universidade e sociedade.

Palavras-chave: Comunicação institucional; Divulgação científica; Engajamento. Instagram; Pós-graduação.

Resumen: Este estudio presenta un relato de experiencia extensionista, con enfoque cualitativo y carácter descriptivo, sobre el uso de Instagram como estrategia de comunicación institucional y divulgación científica en el Programa de Posgrado en Zootecnia de la Universidad Federal de

Grande Dourados (PPGZ/UFGD). Las acciones se realizaron durante la difusión de cuatro procesos de selección consecutivos (PS-2024/2, PS-2025/1, PS-2025/2 y PS-2026/1) mediante publicaciones sistemáticas en Stories, utilizando lenguaje accesible, elementos visuales estandarizados y etiquetado de estudiantes para ampliar el alcance orgánico. La evaluación se basó en indicadores de Instagram Insights, considerando visualizaciones, interacciones y tasa de participación, además de la caracterización del público alcanzado. Se observó variación entre los ciclos y un aumento de las interacciones totales y del compromiso cualitativo a lo largo del tiempo, lo que sugiere maduración de las estrategias comunicacionales y fortalecimiento de la visibilidad institucional. Los resultados refuerzan el potencial de las redes sociales como herramienta de extensión universitaria, contribuyendo a democratizar la información sobre los procesos de selección y a acercar la universidad a la sociedad.

Palabras clave: Comunicación institucional; Divulgación científica; Participación; Instagram; Posgrado

INTRODUCTION

University extension is one of the fundamental pillars of higher education, promoting dialogical interaction between the university and society and enabling the socialization of scientific knowledge in line with social demands. According to the Guidelines for Extension in Brazilian Higher Education, extension should be inextricably integrated with teaching and research, guided by civic education and social transformation (BRASIL, 2018). In this context, within the scope of postgraduate studies in Animal Science, extension activities assume a strategic role by increasing the visibility of the research developed, valuing the training of qualified human resources, and strengthening the link between academia, the productive sector, and the community in general.

However, a mismatch is still observed between the production and dissemination of institutional information and the effective access of society, especially with regard to the selection processes for postgraduate programs. Many potential candidates face difficulties in accessing calls for applications, understanding selection criteria, and keeping up with deadlines, which highlights the existence of informational, geographical, and communicational barriers. This scenario contributes to the maintenance of inequalities in access to postgraduate studies, limiting the participation of audiences that are not directly involved in academic circles or that have less familiarity with traditional dissemination channels.

With the advancement of digital technologies and the consolidation of social networks as spaces for communication and social interaction, new forms of scientific dissemination have

been established in academia. According to Bueno (2010), scientific communication in digital environments contributes to the democratization of knowledge by reducing the distance between scientific production and society, expanding access to information for non-specialized audiences. In this scenario, digital platforms begin to play a relevant role in mediating between science and society.

Among these tools, Instagram stands out for its visual nature, accessible language, and wide reach, characteristics that favor not only the dissemination of scientific and institutional content, but also the clearer, more accessible, and timely dissemination of strategic information, such as calls for proposals and selection processes. Recent studies indicate that the use of Instagram as an instrument for scientific dissemination and university extension has proven effective in bringing science closer to the population, going beyond traditional academic channels and expanding the social impact of the actions developed (MARTINS; SOUZA, 2022).

Furthermore, outreach experiences reported in the literature demonstrate that the systematic use of this platform contributes to increasing public engagement, stimulating interaction between university and society, and strengthening the communicative training of students and teachers involved in science communication processes (GOUVEIA; OLIVEIRA; SILVA, 2023). In this sense, digital social networks begin to act not only as instruments of dissemination, but also as formative spaces and spaces for the collective construction of knowledge.

Within the institutional context, the strategic use of social media also favors the strengthening of the academic identity of Graduate Programs. As discussed by Silva and Costa (2023), the systematic dissemination of academic activities, research lines, scientific events, selection processes, and achievements of students and faculty through Instagram contributes to the public appreciation of science and graduate studies, in addition to increasing the transparency of actions developed by higher education institutions.

Thus, a gap in traditional extension practices becomes evident, which still presents limitations in accessible communication and the broad dissemination of information about selection processes. The use of Instagram as an extension tool therefore emerges as a relevant strategy to reduce informational inequalities, broaden access to calls for proposals, and democratize entry into postgraduate studies, in addition to strengthening the connection between university and society and enhancing the social impact of actions developed within the scope of postgraduate studies.

Given this scenario, the present study aims to report and discuss the experience of

using the Instagram platform as a tool for scientific, institutional, and extension dissemination in the Postgraduate Program in Animal Science at the Federal University of Grande Dourados (PPGZ/UFGD), focusing on strengthening academic communication and expanding the reach of selection processes. To this end, it seeks to describe the creation and application of digital dissemination strategies aimed at the program's institutional communication, develop informative, accessible, and visually appealing content related to selection processes, and analyze the reach and engagement of the publications. Additionally, it intends to evaluate the contribution of Instagram to the democratization of information and the expansion of the program's visibility, as well as identify the main benefits and challenges associated with the use of digital social networks as tools for university extension and scientific communication.

METHODOLOGY

This study is characterized as an extension experience report, with a qualitative and descriptive approach, developed using the official profile of the Postgraduate Program in Animal Science at the Federal University of Grande Dourados @ppgz.ufgd on the Instagram platform. The actions were carried out during the periods of dissemination of four consecutive selection processes of the

The selection processes were organized on a semester basis, taking place during the following periods: PS-2024/2 (April), PS-2025/1 (November), PS-2025/2 (April), and PS-2026/1 (November). This periodicity allowed for strategic planning of outreach activities over time, focusing on consolidating continuous and efficient communication.

In this context, the actions developed aimed to broaden the reach of information, strengthen institutional communication, and bring the Postgraduate Program in Animal Science at UFGD (PPGZ/UFGD) closer to the external public interested in postgraduate studies, contributing to greater visibility and democratization of access to academic opportunities.

The dissemination strategies were implemented through the systematic publication of content in the stories section of the program's official profile, leveraging the platform's own resources, such as informative texts, institutional images, standardized visual elements, and direct calls to action for the selection processes. As a central strategy to maximize the organic reach of the publications, the tagging of students regularly enrolled in the PPGZ/UFGD program was adopted, encouraging the spontaneous sharing of information on their personal profiles and expanding the circulation of the content beyond the audience originally linked to the institutional profile.

The published content included essential information related to each selection process,

including deadlines, stages, evaluation criteria, research areas, and supervising faculty. The materials were developed using accessible, objective, and visually appealing language to facilitate comprehension of the information by different audiences, especially potential candidates from outside the institution.

The evaluation of the extension activities was conducted descriptively, considering the four selection processes analyzed individually and comparatively. For this purpose, the metric indicators provided by the Instagram Insights tool were used, including the reach of the publications (number of unique accounts reached), the number of story views, the number of shares, as well as the interactions recorded, such as likes, replies, comments, and clicks on links, when available.

The indicators obtained for each selection process were organized and analyzed comparatively, allowing for the evaluation of the effectiveness of the dissemination strategies over time. Communication actions were carried out with an average frequency of one post per day, over a period of approximately one month for each call for applications, ensuring consistency and progressive reach among the target audience. No inferential statistical analyses were applied, in accordance with the extensionist, exploratory, and descriptive nature of the study, which focuses on the analysis of practical experience and the evaluation of the social and communicational impact of the actions developed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The percentage distribution of the audience by country of origin shows a strong predominance of users located in Brazil, who accounted for 96.7% of total views. This result is expected, considering that the Postgraduate Program in Animal Science at UFGD is part of the Brazilian postgraduate system and that the selection processes advertised are regulated by national regulations. This predominance indicates that the dissemination strategies adopted were effective in reaching the priority target audience, composed mainly of potential candidates residing in the national territory, as shown in graph 01.



Chart 01 - Percentage distribution of the audience by country of origin

Data obtained through Instagram Insights from the official profile of the Postgraduate Program in Animal Science at the Federal University of Grande Dourados (PPGZ/UFGD). *Includes countries with individual participation of less than 0.4%.

The presence of access from other countries, albeit in small proportions, such as Paraguay (1.1%), Portugal (0.6%), and the United States (0.4%), reveals a relevant aspect of the outreach reach of the actions developed. Paraguay's participation may be associated with geographical proximity and the cross-border academic dynamics characteristic of the Central-West region, especially in Mato Grosso do Sul. This data reinforces the potential of social networks as tools for disseminating academic information beyond national borders.

The international reach, although still incipient, can also be interpreted as a reflection of the platform's algorithmic functioning and the practice of organic sharing of publications, which expands the circulation of content in networks external to the immediate institutional audience. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), content considered relevant and socially shareable tends to extend beyond its original audience, reaching users from different geographical contexts, even when there is no explicit internationalization strategy.

From the perspective of university outreach, these results indicate that Instagram can act as a complementary channel for the passive internationalization of postgraduate studies, expanding institutional visibility and enabling initial contact with external audiences. As discussed by Veletsianos (2012), the presence of academic institutions on digital social networks contributes to expanding their public projection and reinforcing their scientific identity in global digital environments, even if the main audience remains local or national.

In summary, the distribution by country demonstrates that the dissemination strategies

were effective in reaching primarily the national audience, without completely restricting the international circulation of information. This pattern reinforces the potential of social networks as flexible outreach tools, capable of simultaneously meeting local institutional objectives and progressively expanding the geographic reach of academic communication.

The percentage distribution of the audience by major cities shows a strong concentration of views in Dourados (27.7%), the city where the Federal University of Grande Dourados is located. This result was expected, since a significant portion of the initial audience of the institutional profile is composed of students, alumni, staff, and individuals directly linked to the local context of the university. This concentration reinforces the role of Instagram as an effective institutional communication tool for the immediate audience.

Table 01 - Percentage distribution of the audience by main cities reached by the PPGZ/UFGD Instagram account.

City	Percentage (%)
Dourados	27.7
Campo Grande	8.0
Manaus	1.6
Fatima do Sul	1.3
Other cities*	61.4

Source: Data obtained through Instagram Insights from the official profile of the Postgraduate Program in Animal Science at the Federal University of Grande Dourados (PPGZ/UFGD). *Includes cities with individual participation of less than 1.3%.

The presence of Campo Grande (8.0%) as the second city with the highest participation indicates the expansion of reach beyond the host municipality, reaching the state capital and, consequently, a broader regional audience. This data is relevant from an extension perspective, as it demonstrates that the dissemination strategies adopted went beyond the strictly local audience, reaching potential candidates located in other urban centers of Mato Grosso do Sul, where there is a greater concentration of institutions, professionals, and students in the field of Agricultural Sciences.

The occurrence of views originating from geographically more distant cities, such as Manaus (1.6%), as well as from smaller municipalities, such as Fátima do Sul (1.3%), demonstrates the capacity of social networks to break down spatial barriers and expand the circulation of academic information. Although these percentages are individually small, their presence indicates that the disseminated content was shared and distributed organically across

different contact networks, a fundamental characteristic of digital platforms (KAPLAN; HAENLEIN, 2010).

It is also noteworthy that the category "Other cities," which accounts for 61.4% of views, reveals a wide geographical dispersion of the audience reached. This result is particularly relevant for university outreach, as it indicates that most of the reach occurred outside the main identified centers, suggesting capillarity of dissemination actions and potential for democratizing information about selection processes. As pointed out by Veletsianos (2012), this pattern is typical of successful communication strategies on social networks, where content circulates in a decentralized manner and reaches heterogeneous audiences.

In summary, the distribution by city demonstrates that, although there is a strong local focus, the strategies adopted have significantly expanded the territorial reach of the publications, reinforcing the role of Instagram as an outreach tool capable of connecting the Postgraduate Program in Animal Science to regional and national audiences, beyond the physical space of the university.

Table 2 presents the performance of the publications disseminating the selection processes for the Postgraduate Program in Animal Science (PPGZ) on Instagram. Variations were observed between selection cycles regarding reach and engagement rate.

Table 2 – Reach and engagement metrics for PPGZ selection process publications

Selection process	**Views**	**Interactions**	**Engagement rate (%)**
PS- 2024/2	39,553	190	0.48%
PS-2025/1	22,873	435	1.90%
PS-2025/2	28,316	522	1.84%
PS-2026/1	44.135	733	1.66%

The metrics presented refer to the views and interactions recorded on posts advertising the selection processes for the Postgraduate Program in Animal Science (PPGZ) on the Instagram platform. The engagement rate was calculated as the ratio between the number of interactions and the number of views, expressed as a percentage.

The PS-2026/1 process had the highest number of views and interactions, indicating broad dissemination of information and strengthening of institutional visibility. However, this greater reach did not result in the highest engagement rate, which was higher in the PS-2025/1 and PS-2025/2 processes, demonstrating greater communication efficiency in these posts.

Despite its high reach, the PS-2024 campaign showed the lowest engagement rate,

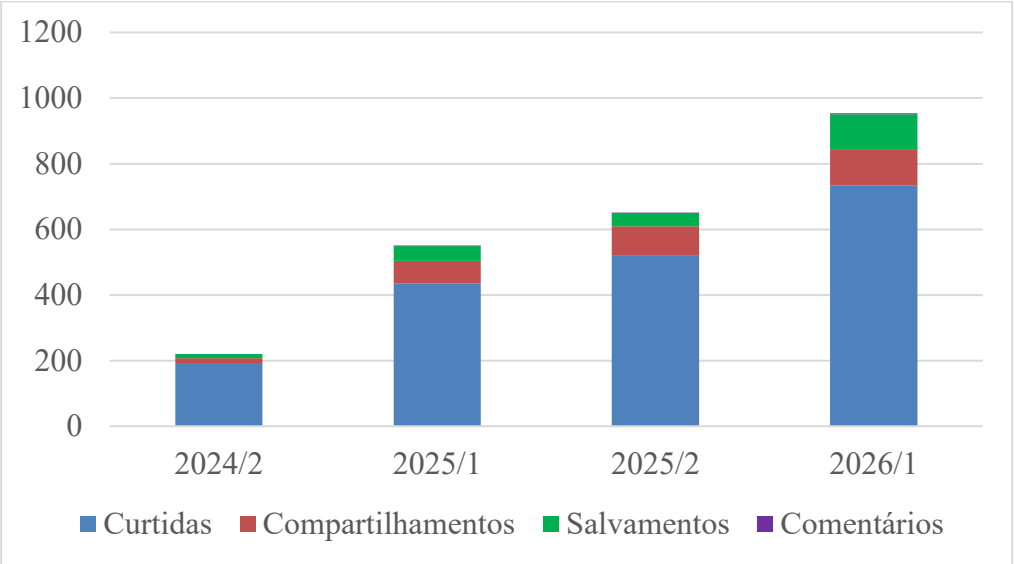
suggesting a predominance of passive views, a recurring pattern in informative institutional content. These results confirm that greater exposure does not necessarily imply greater proportional engagement (BONSON; RATKAI, 2013; PERUTA; SHIELDS, 2017), with engagement being associated with the perceived relevance of the content (MANCA; RANIERI, 2016; VELETSIANOS, 2012).

In the context of university outreach, the data reinforce the potential of Instagram as an institutional communication tool to broaden access to academic information and strengthen the link between university and society (MEWBURN; THOMSON, 2013; LUZÓN, 2017), with engagement metrics acting as complementary indicators of social impact (ALPERIN et al., 2019).

The analysis of interactions by type in the posts publicizing the selection processes shows a progressive evolution of public engagement throughout the evaluated cycles. In PS-2024/2, the low values of likes, shares, saves, and the absence of comments indicate a pattern of essentially passive engagement, characteristic of informative content that prioritizes the unilateral transmission of information (VELETSIANOS, 2012).

In the PS-2025/1 and PS-2025/2 processes, a significant increase in interactions is observed, especially in sharing and saving. This behavior suggests that the content has come to be perceived as socially relevant and functional, stimulating not only consumption but also the dissemination of information. According to Bonsón and Ratkai (2013), the increase in sharing is directly associated with the perception of public utility of the content, while saving reflects informational value and intention to reuse.

Chart 02 - Evolution of engagement indicators on the Instagram of the Postgraduate Program in Animal Science (PPGZ/UFGD) during the periods of dissemination of selection processes.

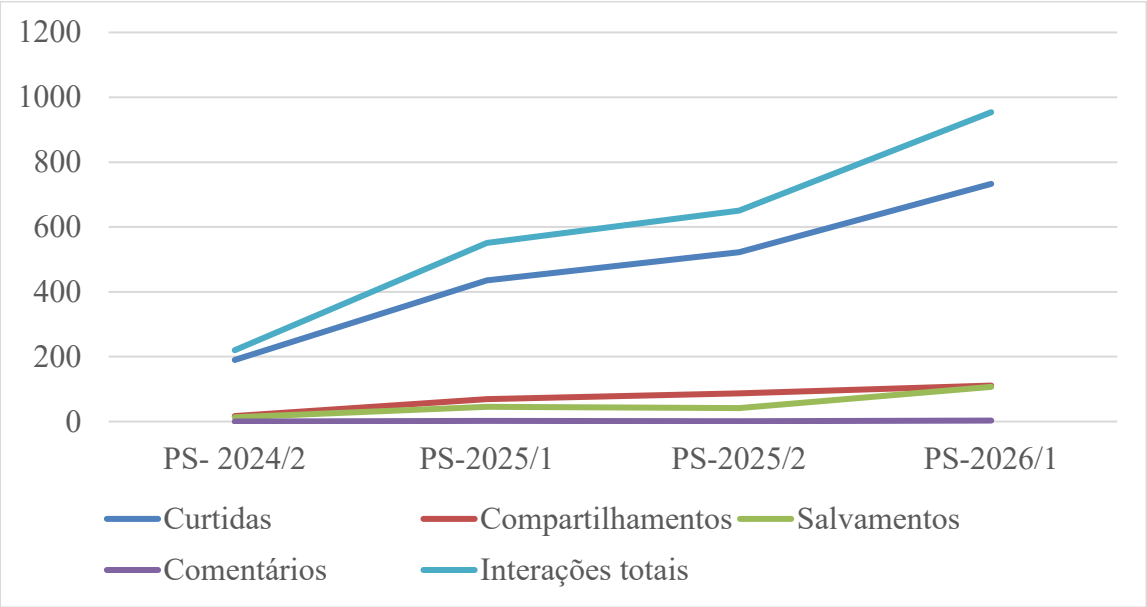


Source: Data obtained through Instagram Insights from the official profile of the Postgraduate Program in Animal Science at the Federal University of Grande Dourados (PPGZ/UFGD), referring to the periods of dissemination of selection processes between 2024/2 and 2026/1.

PS-2026/1 showed the best performance in all metrics analyzed, standing out for its high number of saves and shares. These indicators reinforce that more consolidated communication strategies favor the construction of qualitative engagement, in which users actively interact with the content and incorporate it as an informational reference (KAPLAN; HAENLEIN, 2010). Although the absolute number of comments remains low, this pattern is common in institutional profiles, where engagement occurs primarily through actions with low cognitive cost, such as liking and sharing (MANCA; RANIERI, 2016).

In an integrated manner, the results demonstrate that the expansion of interactions over time is associated with the maturation of the scientific and extension dissemination strategy, reinforcing the role of social networks as effective tools to broaden reach, strengthen institutional communication, and bring the university closer to society (VELETSIANOS; KIM, 2012). Graph 3 clearly shows the temporal evolution of engagement in posts disseminating information about selection processes, allowing us to observe both the quantitative growth of interactions and changes in their profile throughout the analyzed cycles. This behavior is consistent with studies that point to social networks as dynamic environments for learning and institutional communication, in which engagement tends to intensify as the public recognizes value and reliability in the published content (KAPLAN; HAENLEIN, 2010; VELETSIANOS, 2012).

Graph 3 - Temporal evolution of engagement indicators and total interactions on the Instagram of the Postgraduate Program in Animal Science (PPGZ/UFGD) during the selection processes.



Source: Data extracted from Instagram Insights of the official profile of the Postgraduate Program in Animal Science at the Federal University of Grande Dourados (PPGZ/UFGD), referring to the periods of dissemination of the selection processes PS-2024/2, PS-2025/1, PS-2025/2 and PS-2026/1.

In PS-2024/2, all indicators show reduced values, with a predominance of likes and low levels of shares, saves, and comments. This pattern characterizes an essentially reactive engagement, in which users consume content but perform few actions of greater involvement. According to Manca and Ranieri (2016), this type of interaction is common in institutional profiles in the initial phases of digital consolidation, when communication is still mainly based on the unidirectional transmission of information.

Starting with PS-2025/1, a significant increase in likes and total interactions is observed, accompanied by consistent growth in shares and saves. This behavior suggests greater recognition of the content's relevance and better adaptation of language and format to the audience's expectations. According to Bonsón and Ratkai (2013), sharing is a strong indicator of social engagement, as it reflects the user's intention to broaden the reach of information to their own network.

In PS-2025/2, the growth trend continues, albeit more gradually. Likes and total interactions continue to increase, while saves show relative stability before new growth. This pattern can be interpreted as a period of consolidation of the communication strategy, in which the profile has already achieved institutional recognition and reinforces its role as a reliable source of academic information. In this context, saves indicate the utilitarian value of the

content, especially relevant in actions to publicize selection processes (VELETSIANOS; KIM, 2012).

PS-2026/1 represents the point of greatest maturity in digital communication, concentrating the highest values in all metrics. The sharp growth in total interactions results mainly from the significant increase in likes, shares, and, above all, saves. This pattern characterizes a qualitative engagement, in which the audience not only consumes the content but incorporates it as an informational reference. Although comments remain numerically low throughout the period, this behavior is consistent with findings in the literature, which indicate that discursive interactions require greater cognitive effort and tend to be less frequent in institutional profiles (MANCA; RANIERI, 2016).

In an integrated way, the graph demonstrates that the evolution of engagement did not occur randomly, but followed a progressive process of improving dissemination strategies, reinforcing the potential of social networks as tools for university extension. These results corroborate the literature by indicating that continuous, planned communication practices aligned with the target audience broaden reach, strengthen interaction, and contribute to bringing universities and society closer together (KAPLAN; HAENLEIN, 2010; VELETSIANOS, 2012).

In the PS-2025/2 November period, the growth trend continues, albeit more gradually. Likes and total interactions continue to increase, while saves show slight stability before new growth. This behavior may indicate a period of consolidation of the communication strategy, maintaining audience interest and reinforcing the informative value of the content.

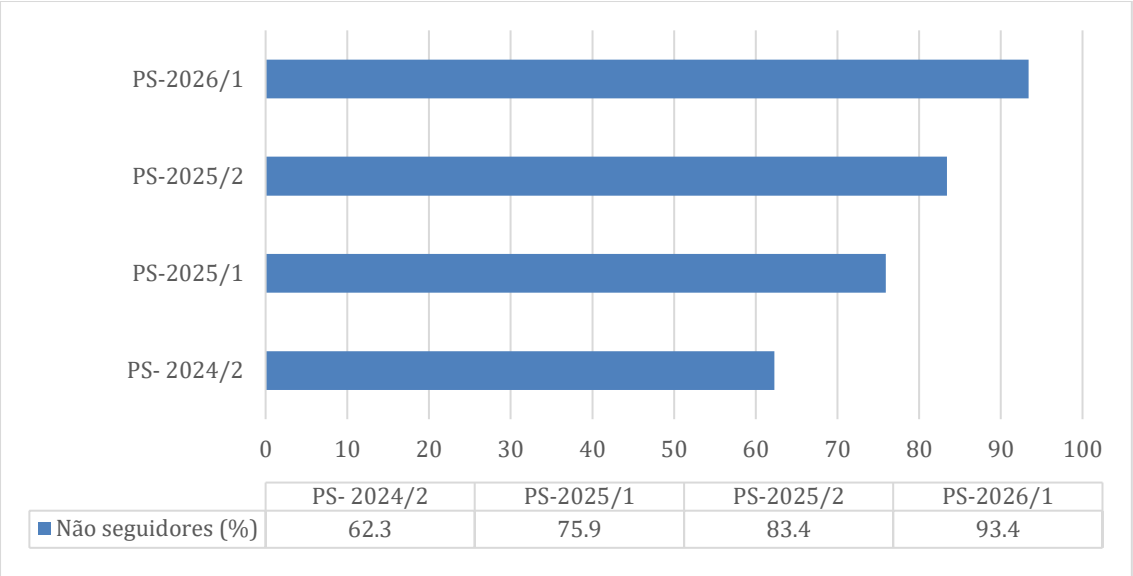
PS-2026/1 stands out as the point of greatest maturity in digital communication, concentrating the highest values in all metrics. The sharp increase in total interactions results mainly from the significant growth in likes, shares, and, above all, saves. This pattern reinforces that the content not only reached a larger audience but also generated qualitative engagement, characterized by the appropriation and dissemination of information. Although comments remained numerically low throughout the period, their constant presence indicates a stable level of direct interaction, consistent with the typical behavior of institutional profiles.

In an integrated way, the graph demonstrates that the evolution of engagement did not occur randomly, but followed a progressive process of improving dissemination strategies, strengthening the role of social networks as university extension tools, capable of expanding reach, stimulating interaction and consolidating the institution as a reliable source of information.

Graph 4 shows a progressive increase in the proportion of views from non-followers

throughout the analyzed selection processes, indicating a consistent expansion of organic reach beyond the audience already linked to the institutional profile.

Graph 4 - Percentage of reach of non-followers in the Instagram posts of the Postgraduate Program in Animal Science (PPGZ/UFGD) during the selection processes.



Source: Data obtained through Instagram Insights from the official profile of the Postgraduate Program in Animal Science at the Federal University of Grande Dourados (PPGZ/UFGD), referring to the selection processes PS-2024/2, PS-2025/1, PS-2025/2 and PS-2026/1.

In the PS-2024/2 November campaign, approximately 62.3% of views were generated by non-followers, suggesting that, even in the early stages of the dissemination strategy, the content already had the capacity to extend beyond the fixed follower base. This result indicates potential for initial diffusion, although still limited when compared to later processes.

In subsequent cycles, a significant increase in this indicator is observed. In PS-2026/2 November, the participation of non-followers reaches 75.9%, reflecting greater circulation of content in environments external to the profile, such as direct shares, third-party feeds, and algorithmic recommendations. This behavior is associated with content considered relevant, timely, and socially shareable, as described by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010).

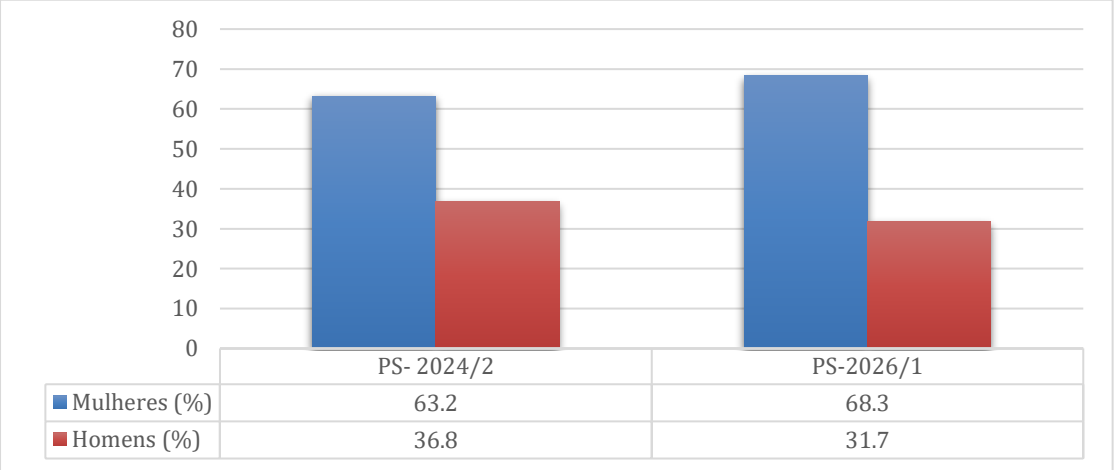
The higher values observed in subsequent processes (83.4% and 93.4%) reinforce the consolidation of the digital communication strategy, showing that most of the reach was obtained among audiences not yet institutionally linked to the profile. According to Veletsianos (2012), this pattern is characteristic of academic profiles that begin to act effectively as channels for scientific and institutional dissemination, expanding their extension function.

From the perspective of university outreach, this result is particularly relevant, as it indicates that the posts not only informed existing followers but also reached new audiences, expanding the program's visibility and potentially stimulating the recruitment of new candidates. Furthermore, the predominance of non-followers suggests good algorithmic performance of the publications, frequently associated with high levels of sharing and saving (BONSÓN; RATKAI, 2013).

In summary, graph 04 demonstrates that the growth in the participation of non-followers in views reflects the strengthening of the organic reach and communication effectiveness of the profile over time, consolidating social networks as strategic tools for institutional dissemination and extension activities.

Graph 5 shows a predominance of women in the audience reached by the analyzed posts, a pattern that is maintained and intensifies over time. In PS-2024/2, women represented approximately 63% of the audience, while men accounted for approximately 37%. In PS-2026/1, an increase in this asymmetry is observed, with approximately 68% women and 32% men, indicating a broadening of reach among the female audience.

Chart 5 - Percentage distribution by gender of the audience reached by the Instagram posts of the Postgraduate Program in Animal Science (PPGZ/UFGD) during the selection processes.



Source: Data obtained through Instagram Insights from the official profile of the Postgraduate Program in Animal Science at the Federal University of Grande Dourados (PPGZ/UFGD), referring to the selection processes PS-2024/2 and PS-2026/1.

This result suggests that the communication strategies adopted have begun to engage more effectively with women, whether through informative content, visual design, or the way information is presented. The literature indicates that women tend to show greater engagement in digital environments focused on education and information, especially on institutional social

networks, with a greater propensity for interactions such as likes, saves, and shares (MANCA; RANIERI, 2016; VELETSIANOS, 2012).

Furthermore, the increased participation of women throughout the selection processes may reflect both the demographic profile of the audience interested in postgraduate programs and the consolidation of social networks as accessible and inclusive spaces for scientific dissemination. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) highlight that audience identification with the content is a central factor in increasing reach and recurrence of views, which seems to occur more intensely among female users of the profile.

From the perspective of university outreach, this pattern is relevant because it indicates that digital communication has the potential to stimulate women's interest and participation in academic selection processes, contributing to the democratization of access to information and the reduction of institutional barriers. However, the observed difference also points to the need for complementary strategies that broaden the reach to the male audience, seeking greater balance and diversity in engagement.

In summary, the results show that the evolution of engagement and reach of publications did not occur randomly, but was directly associated with the continuous improvement of the digital communication strategies adopted by the program. In this context, the use of Instagram is consolidated as a strategic extension tool, capable of expanding the dissemination of academic information, strengthening institutional visibility, and promoting interaction with different audiences. This dynamic is directly aligned with the objective of this study, which is to evaluate the effectiveness of scientific dissemination actions on social networks, demonstrating that such strategies not only broaden the reach of information but also enhance the social impact of postgraduate studies by bringing the university closer to society in an accessible, dynamic, and decentralized way.

CONCLUSIONS

The strategic use of Instagram proved to be an effective tool for disseminating the selection processes of the Postgraduate Program in Animal Science at the Federal University of Grande Dourados (PPGZ/UFGD), contributing to the expansion of information reach and the strengthening of audience engagement. The adoption of systematic publications in *stories* , associated with tagging students and using accessible language, favored organic reach, especially among non-followers, demonstrating the consolidation of communication strategies throughout the analyzed cycles.

From an outreach perspective, the results reinforce the potential of social networks as

instruments for democratizing access to academic information and for bringing universities and society closer together, expanding institutional visibility and the social impact of actions developed by the PPGZ/UFGD.

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