

## **MARKETING COMMUNICATION ADVANCEMENT APPROACHES ON SOCIAL MEDIA FOR UNIVERSITIES IN PATHUM THANI**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The objective of this research was to study the demand of Universities' news consumption on Social Media of university students. Samples were of 400 university students in PathumThani who were already online users. Data was collected by survey questionnaire. Data analysis employed percentage, mean and standard deviation. The research hypotheses were tested by T-test, One-way ANOVA and Pearson Correlation Analysis. Research findings indicated the high demand in social media usage of students for academic purpose such as contacting with their lecturer, keeping up with the bulletin board as well as with the registration and evaluation was high. For non-academic purpose, they used social media for exchanging opinion, building network within the university, follow up with news and activities as well as approaching the top executives. The Facebook is the most popular channel. The Smartphone was used to connect social media. The Social media access was during 15:01-18:00. Although they followed 5-6 university Facebook Fanpages, they were still confused with information that the pages presented.

Hypotheses testing indicated that the demand for social media usage of academic purposes in terms of "keeping up with the university movement" and "keeping with the academic information" had correlation with social media news consumption behavior of university students with coefficient (r) as of 0.81 and 0.52. In the meantime, the demand for social media usage of non-academic purposes "keeping up with the university movement", "keeping with additional activity updates" and "connecting with friends with the university" had correlation with social media news consumption behavior of university students with coefficient (r) as of 0.22, 0.68 and 0.13 at the statistical significance as of 0.05.

**Keywords:** Online social media, marketing communication, university

## Introduction

Social media plays a big part in people's life around the world in both personal and business aspects with its speed, inexpensive cost and popularity nowadays.

It is essential that government and non-government organizations should adjust their communication platform to be relevant with the change in media consumption behavior.



Figure 1 Thailand's Most Popular Social Network

Syndacast conducted a survey for online social networking in Thailand and discovered that Facebook, YouTube and Twitter were the top 3 most popular social network respectively while the top 3 largest users were those who aged 18-24 years old, 25-34 years old and 13-17 years old. It was obvious that most of the online Social Media users were students (Syndacast, 2015).

With the increasing role of online marketing communication these days, it is crucial for the education industry to accommodate the communication materials as per the growing university Facebook fan pages such as Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi (RMUTT) with 37,750 followers, University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce (UTCC) with 32,566 followers, Bangkok University (BU) with 21,340 followers, Srinakharinwirot University (SWU) with 16,424 followers and Rangsit University (RSU) with 9,216 followers. Not only Facebook, YouTube videos also is another platform that gets across to target consumers such as general viewers, current students, alumni and teachers under the objectives to create awareness, build confidence and broadcast the course program as well as additional activities.

Thus, researchers were interested in the advancement approach of Social Media marketing communication for universities in PathumThani for the more efficiency building in communication and flawless response towards the demand for the positive perception and quick decision making when it comes to their enrollment.

## Research Objectives

1. To study individual factors of university students in PathumThani.
2. To study universities' news consumption behavior of university students in PathumThania social media.
3. To study the demand in social media usage of university students in PathumThani.
4. To develop approaches of marketing communication on social media of universities in PathumThani

## Research Hypotheses

1. Individual characteristics affect universities' news consumption behavior on Social Media of university students in PathumThani.
2. The demand in social media usage correlates to social media news consumption behavior of university students in PathumThani.

**Research Framework**

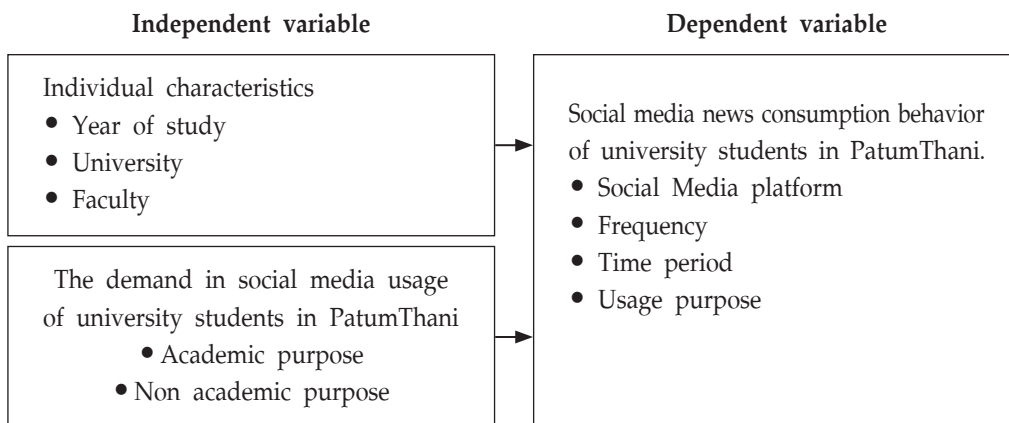


Figure 2 Research Framework

**Literature Review**

**1. Marketing Communication Theory**

Marketing communication is a process of product or service information management by communicating branding principle. Integrated communication tools such as advertising, direct marketing, sales promotion and public relations would reach to target consumer most efficiently (Anantachart, 2007). Marketing communication is a process of planning and developing to continuously persuade the mind of consumers. The goal of marketing communication is to create balance between consumer consumption behavior and market demand with the logo and that could also lead to trust and familiarity towards the brand. There are 5 processes of integrated marketing communication (IMC) planning; 1) IMC that connects to consumer in multiple approaches; 2) IMC that does not start at the product but consumers; 3) IMC that involves both people and media; 4) IMC that creates two-way communication with consumer and 5) IMC with 4 Pstheory under the same process to accomplish the same objective (Wongmontha, 1997: 28-29)

**2. Consumer Behavior Theory**

Consumer behavior theory studies motivations behind each acquisition. It starts from the stimulus in the mind of consumer. The stimulus can be influenced by various factors and is equal to a black box that business owner or distributor cannot predict. The start of this model is based on having the

stimulus that first creates need and later generates response. This model calls S-R Theory (Sereeratana, et al., 1997, p. 124). Nowadays, Technology plays as a vital role in consumer behavior - not only in consumption behavior but also learning behavior. In education industry, Kukulska-Hulme, Traxler and Pettit (2007) mentioned that technology is “in every classroom, on every desk, in every bag.” Under these successful circumstances where pleasure encourages motivation, students first learn the songs and then, listen to the songs on smart phones in their own time, they choose to “exploit small amounts of time and space for learning.” In addition, Teenager consumers spend more their time via online platform than offline for the purposes of searching information for a decision making and female teenagers are influenced by social media than male teenagers in terms of behavior aspect of social networking usage and also found that age affects social media stickiness (Kongrach, 2011).

**3. Social Media**

“Social” refers to society, in this context means online society which is very large nowadays. “Media” refers to medium including contents, stories, articles, VDOs, songs, pictures and etc. Generally, any form of communications that respond to society in various directions through the Internet network in web 2.0 where users can independently exchange thoughts and ideas. Haenlein and Kaplan (2010) used the media research theory and societal process theory by classifying societal media/social media

into 6 different types which were published in the Business Horizontal as following: 1) communication, 2) collaboration, 3) multimedia, 4) criticism and comments, 5) entertainment and 6) brand monitoring. According to the report of “Digital in 2018 in Southeast Asia” shown that the Facebook is the most popular social media platform in Thailand. Moreover, Jankeaw (2016) found that participants realized benefits of social media, Facebook page Dungtrin Fan Club, in terms of adapting and sharing some value information in their real life. Moreover, the fanpage can be a place to share problems and difficulty situations. By contrast, communicating with technology-based self-service or interpersonal, wherelack of human interaction effects on consumers satisfaction (Srijumpa, 2007)

## Research Methodology

### Population and Samples

The study of advancement approach in marketing communication approach on Social Media of universities had been conducted in PathumThani province. The population is unknown number of online social media users who were the university students in PathumThani province. The sample were 400 university students studying in universities located in PathumThani province. Each 80 questionnaires were distributed to five public and private universities as including Bangkok University, Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi, Thammasart University, North Bangkok University and Valaya AlongkornRajabhat University.

## Research Tools and Tools Quality Control

Researchers used closed-ended questions comparing with nominal, ordinal and interval scale measurement. The respondents will answer to the questions regarding three areas of information which were 1) the general information of students covering gender, age, monthly income, year of study, university and faculty; 2) the demand in social media usage and 3) the news consumption behavior on social media. The questionnaire had been tested the validity for its accuracy and relevancy by professionals before being distributed to the respondents. Moreover, researchers also applied cronbach’s alpha coefficient for reliability test where  $r=.831$ .

### Data Analysis

After the questionnaires were returned from the respondents, the researchers investigated the accuracy and completion of the data. Then, the researchers coded the data into the statistical software. Next, the research analyzed the data by using descriptive statistics (Frequency, Percentage, Mean, and Standard deviation) and inferential statistics (ANOVA F-test and Pearson Correlation).

## Results

### General information of respondents

For individual characteristics of students, most of the respondents were female aged 16-18 years old with 5,000 – 10,000 baht monthly income and currently in the second year of business management faculty.

### The demand in social media usage of university students in PathumThani.

Table 1 Mean and Standard Deviation (SD) of the demand in social media of university students in PathumThani for academic purpose

The Demand for Social Media Usage	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Level of Demand
<b>Academic purpose</b>			
1. Keeping up with news bulletin from academic department	4.57	.25	Very high
2. Connecting with lecturers	4.76	.34	Very high
3. Searching for registered subjects	3.20	.04	Neutral
4. Checking for test results	2.62	.87	Neutral
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.89</b>	<b>.14</b>	<b>High</b>

There was a very high demand for social media usage with academic purpose for “connecting with lecturers” and “keeping up with news bulletin from academic department”. In the meantime, students had a neutral demand towards “searching for registered subjects” and “checking for test results”.

Table 2 Mean and standard deviation (SD) of social media demand of university students in PathumThani for non-academic purpose

The Demand for Social Media Usage	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Level of Demand
<b>Non-Academic Purposes</b>			
1. Building network with students from different faculties within the same university	4.35	.04	Very high
2. Exchanging opinion between students and lecturers.	4.36	.77	Very high
3. Each sub unit of university should own separated social media	2.40	.46	Lowest
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.86</b>	<b>0.53</b>	<b>High</b>

Table 2 displayed that student’s demand towards social media usage with a high demand in non-academic purpose. They had opinions towards “exchanging opinion between students and lecturers.” and “building network with students from different faculties within the same university” in a very high demand. However, they did not expect each sub unit within the same university to possess social media.

#### News consumption behavior on social media

According to the data collected from university students in PathumThani on news consumption behavior on Social Media aspect, the Facebook was found as the most popular and active channel where respondents registered. In registering the Facebook,

the study found that most of the students had two accounts per respondent averagely. They usually connected to online social media via Smartphone during 15:01 – 18:00 hours. Respondents followed up to 5 – 6 Fanpages of their university. However, they found confusion in information presented on university’s social media as they agreed on following university’s Fanpages to connect with friends within the same university and update on activities, general movements and academic information.

#### Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1: Individual characteristics affect news consumption behavior on Social Media of university students in Patum Thani.

Table 3 Individual characteristics affect news consumption behavior on Social Media of university students in Patum Thani.

Individual characteristics	news consumption behavior on Social Media of university students in Patum Thani	F	P-value
1. Year of education	Academic Purpose	0.48	.693
	Non-Academic Purpose	0.20	.893
2. University	Academic Purpose	1.13	.343
	Non-Academic Purpose	2.65	.076
3. Faculty	Academic Purpose	1.27	.279
	Non-Academic Purpose	0.75	.556

\* Statistical significance equals .05

From Table 3, The One-way ANOVA indicated that individual characteristics including year of study, university, and faculty were not effect on news consumption behavior on Social Media of university students in Patum Thaniboth academic and

non-academic purposes.

Hypothesis 2: The demand of social media usage on academic purpose correlateswith news consumption behavior on social media of university students in Pathum Thani.

Table 4 Correlation between factors that affect the demand of social media usage on academic purpose and news consumption behavior on social media of university students in PathumThani.

News Consumption Behavior on Social Media of University Students in PathumThani	The Demand of Social Media Usage on Academic Purpose			
	Person Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	Level of relevancy	Direction
1. Keeping up with university's movement	0.81	<b>0.005*</b>	Very high	Same
2. Keeping up with academic news	0.52	<b>0.033*</b>	Medium	Same
3. Keeping up with additional activity updates	0.15	<b>0.529</b>	Very low	Same
4. Connecting with friends within the university	0.62	<b>0.214</b>	Relatively high	Same

\* Statistical significance equals .05

From Table 4, the Pearson' correlation analysis indicated that the demand of social media usage on academic purpose had correlated with news consumption behavior on social media of university students in PathumThani. Considering into each aspect, it was found that the "Keeping up with university's movement" and "Keeping up with academic news" had correlated in the same direction with news consumption behaviors on social media of university students in PathumThani with r

is equal to 0.81 and 0.52, respectively at the statistical significant level as of 0.05. This meant thatthe higher the demand towards social media usage for academic purpose, the higher following up behavior on university movement and academic news. In the meantime, the "Keeping up with additional activity updates" and "Connecting with friends within the university" had not correlated with news consumption behavior on social media of university students in PathumThani.

Table 5 Correlation between factors that affect the demand in Social Media usage for non-academic purpose and news consumption behavioron Social Media of university students in PathumThani.

News Consumption Behavior on Social Media of University Students in PathumThani	The Demand in Social Media Usage for Non-Academic Purpose			
	Person Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	Level of relevancy	Direction
1. Keeping up with university's movement	0.22	0.000*	Relatively low	Same
2. Keeping up with academic news	0.07	0.300	Very low	Same
3. Keeping up with additionalactivity updates	0.68	0.012*	Relatively high	Same
4. Connecting with friends within the university	0.13	0.007*	Very low	Same

\* Statistical significance equals.05

From Table 5, the Pearson' correlation analysis indicated that the demand insocial media usage for non-academic purpose had correlated with news consumption behavior on social media of university students in PathumThani. When considering into each aspect, it was found that "keeping up with university's movement", "keeping up with additional activity updates" and "connecting with friends within the university" had correlated in the same direction with news consumption behavior on social media of university students in PathumThani with  $r$  is equal to 0.22, 0.68 and 0.13, respectively, at the statistical significant level as of 0.05. This meant that the behavior in keeping up with university's movement, keeping up with additional activity updates and connecting with friends within the university would increase once news consumption behavior on Social Media for non-academic purpose increased. In the meantime, the "keeping up with academic news" had not correlated with news consumption behavior on social media of university students in PathumThani.

### Conclusion and Discussion

Respondents had high demand in social media usage for academic purpose for approaching the lecturers and keeping up with the academic news (submitting assignments and getting information regarding to registration and result such as subjects registration – withdrawal). The demand remained high for usage in non-academic purpose. Social Media acted as a tool to exchange opinions between lecturers and students, build students' network with friends from the different faculties within the same university, keep up with additional activity updates and approach to the top executives. This is correspondent with Kanphon(2010) who studied attitude, usage purpose and satisfaction towards social media communication with case study of students and staff at Chalermkarnchana College and the result found that the students had positive attitude towards social media communication as it was where they could express opinion freely as they wished. In addition, the social media also diminished limitations in time and location and acted as a channel to stay in touch with old friends and also getting to know

the new ones in the same time.

On news consumption behavior on social media aspect, the respondents registered and most were active on Facebook with an average of two accounts per a user. They were likely to access social media on their Smartphone. They mostly followed up to 5-6 university Fanpage that was connected with the friends within the same university. They received additional activity updates and followed up with university movement and academic news. This study was matched with the study regarding online social media usage of jobbers in Bangkok by Nitipornmongkhon(2011) in which suggested that the Facebook was the most popular social media among jobbers in Bangkok. Social bakers also ranked Bangkok as 13<sup>th</sup> country with the highest usage of the Facebook accounts in the world, accounted for 12.8 million accounts in 2013. Furthermore, Hemmintra (2013) also observed the usage behavior and opinion towards social media consequences of people in Bangkok. She discovered that most of the people in Bangkok had been using social media for more than three years and the most popular hour was during 18:30 – 06:00. The most favorable benefit of social media for people was about the quickness of news access.

From the hypotheses testing, the factors that affected the demand in social media usage for academic purpose correlated with news consumption behavior of university students in PathumThani with the objectives for keeping up with university's movement and academic news. That was the behavior on keeping up with university's movements and academic news would increase when the demand on social media usage for academic purpose increased. AIDA model stated that Interest, Desire and Action would follow once consumers provided Attention to stories within the university.

However, there was a very low demand towards social media usage for non-academic purpose on keeping up with additional activities in which counted as another important element outside the classroom. It would be better for emotional intelligence development for students who enrolled additional activities as they spent time with others. At the same

time, students with the low demand in social media usage for non-academic purpose also had lower behavior in keeping up with academic news even though the academic news (registration information, examination updates, results and etc.) is the main resource for them to plan the curriculum. It might affect their learning process if they ignored such updates from the academic department.

Thus, it is crucial that universities find stimulus to keep the students interested on updates from both academic and non-academic sides with various media such as Facebook, Line chat, Wechat, Twitter, Instagram, Messenger and others for the wider reach and at the personal level.

### Recommendation for Future Research

1. This research only focused on university students in PathumThani as a sample. For the more impact result displaying a big picture for what could be developed into Marketing Communication strategies, the samples should be extended to other provinces.
2. Other factors apart from demography and demand in Social Media usage should also be considered for the wider and more complete study.
3. There should be a deep study on a specific online social media for its actual role and exclusive behavior of students within that platform.

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