

USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO PUBLICIZE THE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM IN PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS AT THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SUAN SUNANDHA RAJABHAT UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to investigate the efficacy of social media platforms in publicizing the Doctor of Philosophy Program in Philosophy and Ethics at the Graduate School of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. This research adopts a survey-based approach, with a sample of 15 participants who are currently enrolled in the Doctor of Philosophy program. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics, frequency distribution, and percentages. The results reveal that the majority of the respondents are female participants between the ages of 41 and 50, who are unmarried and have an average monthly income of 25,000-35,000 baht. It was also found that the participants reported high levels of satisfaction with regard to the accessibility, reliability, and clarity of information regarding the program.

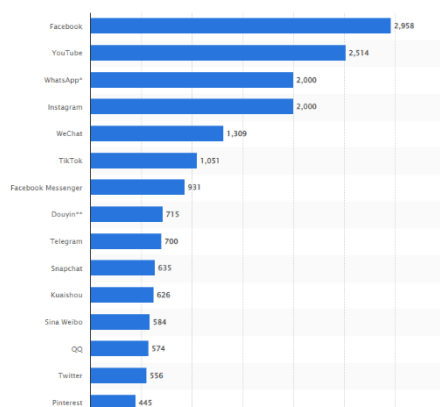
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INTRODUCTION

In contemporary times, it is evident that online social networks have gained significant popularity as a means of social interaction. They facilitate the production and sharing of content in various formats, such as information, images, and sounds, resulting in a society without boundaries. Social networking has become an integral part of human daily life, connecting individuals and fulfilling their social needs by building and reflecting a network of relationships. Social networking services are available on web pages, allowing users to interact with one another over the internet, and share information in various fields, including business, politics, education, and travel experiences, through social media channels. These platforms provide information about feelings in various aspects, such as impressions and dissatisfaction towards people, environments, or situations [1].

Social media is a powerful tool that can promote various types of information, such as promotions, activities, tourist attraction information, accommodation reservations, and tourist attraction check-ins, reaching a larger audience. Popular social networking sites among Thai people include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pantip [1].

Figure 1
The statistics of social networking users worldwide



Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/>

Information and communication technology has become an integral part of education at all levels in Thailand. Various services, such as websites, e-books, and e-learning, are provided, and social media has been adopted as a communication tool between teachers and students, as part of the e-learning textbook project and Thai Cyber University Project (2014). With the development of various social media platforms, users can create and participate in social networks by publishing personal information, articles, pictures, meetups, and comments, allowing them to exchange experiences, information, news, and activities. This creates a vast network of resources that users can utilize to create content according to their interests [2]. The Education Development Plan of the Ministry of Education, Issue 11, 2012-2016, promotes and supports the use of information technology as a tool for educational development. The goal is to develop children and youth who love learning, acquire skills in seeking knowledge, and embrace lifelong learning to keep pace with changes in the global community. The plan aims to develop a variety of learning resources, especially those based on efficient technology, to support the pursuit of knowledge, in line with the educational development plan of the Ministry of Education, No. 12, 2017-2021. Strategy 4 of this plan aims to expand opportunities for access to educational services and lifelong continuous learning [3].

Given this background, the researcher aims to utilize social media to promote the Doctor of Philosophy Program in Philosophy and Ethics at the Graduate School of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, making the curriculum more accessible to interested parties.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

To investigate the application of social media for public relations purposes in the Doctor of Philosophy Program at the Department of Philosophy and Ethics, Graduate School of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the study concerning the utilization of social media in public relations for the Doctor of Philosophy and Ethics Program at the Graduate School of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, extensive analysis of pertinent documents and research was conducted, and presented the following topics:

The concept of social media

Presently, social media is a well-known and prevalent tool used in many countries to reach a broad range of consumers through social networking platforms. The definition of online social networking has been established by various researchers, including Itthipol Pridiprasong [4], who defined it as a phenomenon of interpersonal connection in the realm of the internet, inclusive of online social networking. Additionally, Rules Saisene (2007) stated that online social networks are means to connect people through websites known as social networks. Popular examples of social networks for Thai people today include Facebook, among others. Moreover, Pichit Wijitbunarak [5] discussed in an academic article how humans, as a society, require information communication with one another. In ancient times, communication was achieved through non-complicated methods, such as oral communication, fast horses, and pigeons. As technology progressed, communication was restructured into various forms, such as telegram letters and radio telephones. With the advent of computer networks and the internet, communication has shifted towards electronic mediums such as IRC (Internet Relay Chat) services, chat programs, electronic mail, and web boards. Currently, human beings utilize social media as a means of daily communication, which is consistent with Suteophonpong's [6] assertion that technology has developed to the point where today's world is an era of innovation, and technology plays a crucial role in transforming and controlling human lives in various aspects such as the environment, economy, politics, society, and business on both the international, regional, and domestic levels.

Types of online media

Social media serves as a medium wherein senders share messages in various formats to recipients through online networks. The recipients themselves or the sender and receiver can interact through social media platforms. There are several types of social media platforms that are frequently used, including Blogging, Twitter and Microblogging, Social Networking, and Media Sharing, as presented by Pichit [5]. The specifics are presented as follows:

1. **Blogging:** A blog is a content management system that allows bloggers to publish and share their own articles. It is an effective way of expressing personal opinions and engaging in friendly communication with readers through comments. Popular platforms for creating blogs include Blogger and WordPress.

2. **Twitter and Microblogging:** Microblogging is a type of blog that limits the size of each post, while Twitter is a microblog that limits each post to 140 characters. It is popular for its ease of use and convenience, particularly for organizations that use it to inform the public about their activities.

3. **Social Networking:** Social networking sites allow people to communicate with friends they know or meet online. They typically feature profiles to display personal information, the ability to connect with friends and strangers, and messaging, which can be public or private. Facebook is currently the most popular social networking site.

4. **Media Sharing:** Media sharing sites allow users to upload multimedia files to share information with others. This type of website is popular for its ability to facilitate the sharing of mixed media content, such as videos and slideshows. Examples of such sites include YouTube, Flickr, and SlideShare.

The advent of social media has revolutionized communication by providing an online platform where individuals can share their experiences and interact with one another using various media formats. Social media can be classified into several categories, including publication types such as Wikipedia and blogging, sharing media types such as YouTube, Flickr, and SlideShare, and discussion types with platforms like MSN, Skype, and Google Talk, among others. Nevertheless, there is also confusion surrounding online social networks, which are commonly known as social networks, with examples like Facebook, LinkedIn, and Google Plus (Google+).

From a broader perspective, online media can be defined as a social communication tool that operates via the internet network and enables people to engage in discussions, express opinions, interact, and share experiences at any time. It disseminates information and news from various channels such as blogs, web boards, YouTube, Hi5, Facebook, and Twitter. In addition, online media has become a popular medium for advertising and selling products due to its low cost and ability to directly reach individuals who are interested in the product. In this study, the researcher opted to gather data from online media, which is a communication tool that leverages the internet network.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study employs a quantitative research design to investigate its research questions. The following section outlines the research methodology employed in the study.

1. Population and Sample:

The study population consisted of 15 graduate students enrolled in the Doctor of Philosophy program. A simple random sampling technique was used to select the participants.

2. Tools:

Data was collected through a questionnaire. An open-ended questionnaire was used to gather data, and statistical data analysis was considered during the development of the tool. The questionnaire was tested for both content validity and reliability to ensure its quality.

3. Data Collection:

The researcher prepared a questionnaire sufficient for the number of samples and provided it to the study participants. Before the respondents started to answer the questionnaire, the objectives and the method of answering the questionnaire were clarified. The researcher collected the questionnaire, which took over a period of one month.

4. Data Analysis:

The collected data was analyzed using a computer program. The analysis was conducted using percentage, mean, and standard deviation statistics.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

1. The study comprised 15 respondents, of which 12 were female (80.00 percent) and 3 were male (20.00 percent). Analysis of personal factors revealed that the majority of respondents fell within the age group of 41-50 years (46.66 percent), followed by the age group of 31-40 years (33.33 percent) and 51 years and over (20.01 percent). The majority of respondents were single (73.33 percent) and the remaining were married (26.66 percent). In terms of average monthly income, the highest proportion of respondents fell within the range of 25,001-35,000 baht (80.00 percent), followed by the range of 35,001-45,000 baht (20.00 percent).

2. The students' satisfaction with access to information was observed to be at a high level, with sub-factors such as ease of access, reliability, and comprehensibility. The level of agreement towards the thinking attitude was also high, with an average score of 4.41. The item with the highest average score was related to the respondents' perception of public relations through social media as a channel for quick information retrieval, with an average score of 4.48, indicating a high level of agreement. The item assessing the usefulness of public relations through social media for the course received an average score of 4.36, also indicating a high level of agreement. The distribution of data, considering the standard deviation, indicated a similar distribution of opinions towards the level of thought attitude ($SD = 0.49$).

DISCUSSION

The study revealed that the majority of participants had a high level of exposure to social media, perceiving it as accessible, reliable, and easily comprehensible. Social media emerged as a powerful channel for public relations that enables the rapid dissemination of information. These findings are consistent with the results of Sawitree Suwanno and Nantida Otakam's [7] research on news exposure among individuals residing in communities proximate to Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. Specifically, the results indicated that most of the samples had frequent exposure to news about the university, predominantly through personal media. The hypothesis test demonstrated that respondents with diverse demographic characteristics, such as gender, age, and community, exhibited significantly varied levels of exposure to news about Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University at the 0.05 level of significance. In contrast, no significant difference was observed between samples with different incomes. Moreover, news exposure was significantly correlated with the perception of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University at the 0.01 level of significance.

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