

**Social Media Utilization for Public Relations in Instructional
Information in the Educational Administration Program
at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University**

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the channels and demand for utilizing social media in the Educational Administration Program at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The research sample comprised 108 students enrolled in the program, and data was collected via a questionnaire. The findings reveal that, for the purpose of publicizing teaching and learning information of the Department of Educational Administration, the majority of respondents were female (66.67 percent), aged between 41-50 years (36.11 percent), single (68.52 percent), had an average monthly income of 15,001-25,000 baht (62.03 percent), accessed the network more than once per day (82.40 percent), spent an average of 2-3 hours accessing the online network (37.96 percent), and the most frequently used social media platform was Line (49.07 percent).

Keywords : Social Media / Public Relations / Education Administration.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the field of information technology has experienced rapid growth and development, enabling everyone to easily access the internet. As a result, the number of users accessing the internet is increasing each day. In the era of Web 2.0, individuals have the freedom to share their knowledge and choose the best tools to communicate and present new ideas without any restriction. This new era of information necessitates an awareness of the transition from static content to dynamic content that is continuously changing. The concept of applying social media in teaching and learning has become an important strategy that the Office of the Basic Education Commission is promoting and supporting. Social media has become an essential tool for creating a network of media to connect people in the online world. Everyone can use it as a channel to reach their target audience quickly and easily, making it highly beneficial to education management without incurring any copyright costs. Therefore, social media technology has been used as a media tool and a learning resource in teaching and learning management and public relations, enabling organizations to keep pace with the changing world and reach individuals of all ages quickly.

In today's society, it is undeniable that social media plays a significant role and greatly influences our daily lives, serving as a turning point for communication in new forms. The use of new media has been introduced to the digital age, creating competition with new innovations and technologies invented for use on the network. The internet is accessed through various communication devices such as computers, smartphones, or tablets, which act as channels for disseminating information to users or target groups. Recognizing the benefits of

social media, many agencies and organizations have adapted and integrated their operations, including public relations.

The researcher is interested in utilizing social media to publicize course information, including teaching, exams, and activities, as well as any other useful information for students.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

To study the channel and the need for using Social Media in Educational Administration program, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this research on the use of social media to publicize teaching and learning information of the Department of Educational Administration at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, the researcher has reviewed relevant documents and research and presented the following topics.

1. The Importance of Social Media Public Relations Strategies

In today's society, social media plays an undeniable and significant role that greatly influences our daily lives, serving as a turning point for communication in new forms. The use of new media has been introduced to the digital age, creating competition with new innovations and technologies invented for use on the network. The internet is accessed through various communication devices such as computers, smartphones, or tablets, which act as channels for disseminating information to users or target groups. Recognizing the benefits of social media, many agencies and organizations have adapted and integrated their operations, including public relations. In principle, there are only two components that can make public relations achieve its goals: 1) Public relations media: referring to communication channels that bring information to target

groups, this tool is used to disseminate information that creates knowledge and understanding which will lead to creating a good image for the organization. 2) Public relations activities: Public relations must be able to publicize activities to gain mention. It is important that public relations people systematically implement a plan for using media for public relations, and have a plan drawn up with definite objectives on which target groups to reach and how to reach them. This includes sending the desired message to the target group, having a strategy or strategy for communication, and analyzing limitations or obstacles. However, when selecting media, one must consider selecting the appropriate media that can reach as many target groups as possible, and it should also be a controlled medium so that the message conveyed is accurate and complete. [3]

Regarding public relations strategy via social media, this research focuses on the operation on Facebook, which is a method that will help create cooperation in any activity that leads to information awareness, mission, works, and activities to the general public. This approach relies on the use of various media in combination by setting the exact objective that the target audience, referred to as "Page members/visitors," should know or accept and how. There must be a step-by-step communication plan and appropriate action strategies to be effective for the operation. The important aim is to change the attitudes and behaviors of page members/visitors or related persons, choosing activities and public relations media to provide correct knowledge and understanding, raising awareness, persuading them to agree with or conform to an organization's activities, including acceptance, faith, and cooperation with the organization.

Within the current era of "Social media," which heavily relies on wireless Internet connections, a novel form of communication has emerged: "new media." This two-way communication channel operates through electronic devices such as computers, smartphones, or tablets. It is a personal and portable

communication device that can be carried by the user anywhere and utilized at any time. Additionally, it is convenient, fast, easy to use, aesthetically pleasing, and responsive to the user's needs in all aspects. As new technologies and innovations are continuously developed, the needs and behaviors of information consumption among users are changing and becoming increasingly important day by day. According to Pichit Vijitbunyarak's opinion, "Social media" (Social Media) is a form of accessible information communication for individuals at all levels today. Social media is widely utilized in conjunction with the ever-evolving computer technology, which is anticipated to become the primary medium for people in the future as the importance of online media continues to increase. Conversely, online media remains a useful indicator of major media's popularity, including radio, television, or print media, that may be declining or closing due to an inability to disseminate news at a pace comparable to social media. This is because mainstream media involves complex production processes, their content information can become outdated, and most importantly, they cannot be disseminated to meet the target audience's needs at that moment.

In light of the above context, online media has emerged as a tool or channel that allows government agencies, private sectors, various organizations, and the general public to use more frequently. Facebook, in particular, is recognized as a communication tool that provides information to aid public relations, promote image building, increase business revenue, create engagement, interact with external parties quickly, save costs, and reach a large audience. This is supported by the report "Digital in 2018" by We Are Social, an agency in Singapore, which collected statistics and behavior on the use of the Internet and social media worldwide. The report found that 51 million Thai people use social media, with 46 million accessing it via mobile devices. Thailand is reported to spend the most time accessing the internet per day (including all

devices) globally, averaging 4 hours and 38 minutes per day. Additionally, Thailand is the country that spends the most time surfing the internet on smartphones, with an average time of 4 hours and 56 minutes per day. The average social media playing time is 3 hours and 30 minutes per day, while the average time spent watching TV (broadcast, streaming, video on demand) is not less than 4 hours and 3 minutes per day. Among the top social media platforms used by Thai people, Facebook ranks sixth, with YouTube in second place, LINE in third, Facebook Messenger in fourth, and Instagram in fifth. Notably, of the 50 million Facebook users in Thailand, 49% are women and 51% are men.

2. The concept of public relations

In order to foster positive relationships and understanding between an organization and its stakeholders, it is important to implement effective communication strategies. Such strategies aim to generate cooperation and support from stakeholders, thereby facilitating achievement of the organization's goals. Specifically, the objectives of communication strategies are as follows: [4]

1) To disseminate, clarify, and popularize knowledge and understanding about the roles, policies, goals, and objectives of the organization. The intended audience includes both internal members of the organization as well as external individuals.

2) To build and protect the reputation of the organization by creating a positive image that is trustworthy, reputable, and aligned with social norms. This can be achieved by expressing the right intentions and values that are reflective of the organization's objectives.

3) To elicit cooperation and support from stakeholders.

3. The concept of online social networking

In contemporary society, social networking has emerged as a means of fulfilling social needs by creating and reflecting networks or social relationships among individuals who share common interests or engage in joint activities. These networks are facilitated through web-based services that allow users to interact with one another over the Internet. Social networking services can be categorized according to their primary purpose of access into seven distinct categories:

- 1) Identity Network, which is designed to create and announce one's identity;
- 2) Creative Network, which is geared towards creating and sharing works;
- 3) Passion Network, which focuses on connecting individuals who share a particular passion or interest;
- 4) Collaboration Network, which serves as a platform for collaborative endeavors;
- 5) Virtual Reality, which offers immersive experiences through virtual environments;
- 6) Professional Network, which is geared towards facilitating networking and career-related activities; and
- 7) Peer to Peer (P2P) Network, which connects users directly with one another.

Benefits of Social Networking

Social networking provides several benefits that have made it a popular form of communication among people. These benefits include:

- 1) Facilitating the exchange of information and knowledge among people who share common interests.

2) Acting as a repository of knowledge. Social networking platforms provide a means for users to suggest, comment, exchange knowledge, or ask questions on various topics, which other people who are interested or have answers can help answer.

3) Reducing communication costs between individuals.

4) Providing a platform for individuals to showcase their own work, such as writing, pictures, and videos for others to view or express their opinions.

5) Offering a medium for advertising, public relations, or customer service for companies and organizations.

6) Creating opportunities for productivity and income generation for users, and contributing to employment creation.

7) Providing a means for individuals to alleviate stress by making new friends.

8) Enabling the development of strong relationships between friends.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative research methodology utilizing a questionnaire as the primary data collection method.

1. Population and Sample

The population for this research consists of 150 educational administration students. The sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan sampling formula, based on a population of 150, resulting in a sample size of 108 participants. A simple sampling method was employed to select the participants, and the samples were collected from educational administration students in accordance with the predetermined sample size.

2. Tools

In this study, the researcher utilized statistical data analysis methods to examine the data collected. An open-ended questionnaire was employed as the primary data collection tool. The questionnaire's quality was tested for both content validity and reliability to ensure that it meets the study's objectives.

3. Data Collection

To collect data, the researcher prepared an adequate number of questionnaires, which were then distributed to the sample group. The quality of the questionnaire was confirmed by the researcher to ensure that the respondents understood the objectives and knew how to answer the questionnaire before proceeding. The data collection process took approximately one month to complete.

4. Data Analysis

The data collected from the questionnaire was analyzed using computer software. The statistics employed included percentages, means, and standard deviations to summarize and examine the collected data.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

1. Personal characteristics of the participants were examined, revealing that the majority of the respondents were female, comprising 66.67 percent of the sample. Males accounted for the remaining 33.33 percent. Regarding age, participants ranged from 20 to over 50 years old, with those in the age group of 41-50 years old constituting the highest proportion at 36.11 percent. The second largest age group was those between 20-30 years old, accounting for 34.25 percent, followed by the 31-40 years old group, comprising 22.22 percent, and those aged 51 years and above, comprising 7.42 percent of the sample. Marital status revealed that the majority of the respondents were single, representing

68.52 percent, while 28.70 percent were married, and 2.78 percent were divorced. In terms of average monthly income, 62.03 percent of the respondents reported a monthly income of 15,001-25,000 baht, followed by 25.92 percent with an income of 25,001-35,000-baht, 8.33 percent with an income of 35,001-45,000 baht, and 3.72 percent with an income of 45,001 baht or more.

2. With regards to social media use, respondents were categorized based on the frequency of network access. The results indicate that the majority of the respondents accessed social media more than once a day, accounting for 82.40 percent of the sample, followed by once a day, comprising 14.81 percent. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents reported spending an average of 2-3 hours accessing social media, representing 37.96 percent, followed by 1-2 hours, comprising 33.33 percent. In terms of social media platform preference, the results showed that Line was the most popular platform among respondents, representing 49.07 percent, followed by Facebook, accounting for 42.29 percent of the sample.

DISCUSSION

The study investigated the utilization of social media as a medium for disseminating teaching and learning information from the Department of Education Administration at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. Findings revealed that a majority of respondents allocated 2-3 hours for accessing online networks, with The Line application being the primary source for obtaining program information. This result aligns with the findings of a previous study conducted, which investigated information exposure among individuals residing in the vicinity of the university. The study indicated that the majority of participants were highly exposed to news about the university through personal media. The hypothesis test results revealed significant differences in levels of

exposure to news about Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University among individuals with varying demographic characteristics, including gender, age, and community, with statistical significance at the .05 level. However, there were no differences in news exposure among samples with different incomes. Furthermore, the study found a significant correlation between exposure to news and the image of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University at the .01 level of significance.

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