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Research Article

Social Media Usage Behaviors: Evidence of College Students from a Selected University in Thailand

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Abstract: This present study seeks to investigate college students' social media usage behaviors. Data were collected from 109 freshman students at a selected public university through an online survey. Results demonstrated that respondents had used social media platforms for about 7.49 years. The average time spent daily on social media application was 8.23 hours. This study also revealed that this group of college students frequently used social media during the evening. For the highest use social media platform, the majority of these respondents used Facebook as a primary application followed by Instagram and YouTube. In addition, the primary purpose of social media usage among these college students was for entertainment. Limitations and research applications were also discussed.
Keywords: Social media, Social networking, Social media behaviors, Social media usage.

INTRODUCTION

Since the early 2000s, social media increasingly becomes an essential part of individuals' lives in a digital era (Simsek, 2015). As social media platforms can ease individuals connect and interact with others around the world and also share their common interests through the technologies, the growth of social media has significantly shifted from the past years. Approximately 3.5 billion people around the world are using social media platforms nowadays (Ortiz-Ospina, 2019). Facebook is the highest use social media platform in the world with 2.4 billion accounts.

In the present day, social media plays a vital role in all aspects of people's lives, particularly learning behaviors of university students (Amukune, 2013; Abbas et al., 2019). One of various benefits of using social media is to help university students make a good relationship with their peers and discuss related issues of studies with their classmates. However, the use of social media can also lead to detrimental consequences for the users especially teenagers, if they do not wisely realize the dark side of social media (Talaue et al., 2018). In the light of this, numerous studies attempted

to place their emphasis on social media behaviors among college students to examine whether or not social media has an impact on students' behaviors and academic performance (Rahman 2014; Al-Sharqi, Hashim, & Kutbi, 2015; Abbas et al., 2019). However, the focus on social media usage behaviors among college students in Thai universities is scant, and needs to pay more attention (Promsri, 2019). Since the numbers of internet users in Thailand has extensively increased to nearly 90 percent of its population, the use of social media as part of education and learning system is inevitable. A recent survey on social media trend in 2019 revealed that Thai people spent time daily using the internet via any device approximately 9 hours and 11 minutes while the average time spent daily on social media via any device was 3 hours and 11 minutes. Most of this time spent on social media was for entertainment purpose rather than business or education purpose (Phanpinit & Kansirisin, 2019). To focus on individuals in the educational setting, this study; therefore, seeks to investigate college students' social media usage behaviors. The benefit of this present study is to provide additional information for related studies in this area to utilize for the academic and research advancement.

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Literature Reviews

Social media is understood as web-based tools and applications that enable individuals to share information and messages as well as discuss topics via network technologies (Simsek, 2015). Individuals can convey messages in different forms such as text, audio, photograph, and interactive program through distinguished platforms of communication such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Line, Snapchat, YouTube, WhatsApp, and WeChat, etc. The recent global survey conducted by Synthesio, Inc. revealed that the most popular social media platform with the highest usage by people around the world was Facebook followed by Instagram and Twitter (Yeung, 2019). Social media usage allows users to create their own contents; however, most people rarely consider this benefit and perceive themselves as users in networking rather than the content providers (Koçak & Oyman, 2012).

Numerous past studies attempted to investigate social media usage behaviors of students in a different context. For example, Rahman (2014) examined international students' use of social networking sites. A sample of 316 international students who studied in New Zealand was gathered for data collection through a questionnaire. This study tended to compare the different frequency of social networking sites usage between international students and host country students. Results showed that Facebook, Google+, Twitter, Myspace, and Linkedin were the most popular social media platforms used by the international students in New Zealand. Also, this study indicated that the primary purposes of social media usage of international students were for personal purposes, entertainment, business, and education. In addition, this study found that female students were more likely to share their personal information than males. A similar study of Al-Sharqi, Hashim, and Kutbi (2015) revealed the different perceptions of social media impact on social behaviors between Arts and Science students in a selected university in Saudi Arabia. A total of 2,605 students participated in this study by completing a survey questionnaire. This study found that the main purpose of social media usage was for entertainment followed by information searching, and education purpose, respectively. Interestingly, this study disclosed that respondents viewed the benefits of social media on social behavior as the channel to enable them learn more about other people's thinking styles, interact with others, and develop their open-minded ability. For the most popular social media application used by students, this study found that YouTube was the highest use platform followed by Twitter and Facebook.

In addition, Promsri (2019) scrutinized social media behaviors of international students who studied in BBA program in international program at a selected public university in Bangkok, Thailand. Data were collected from 33 students through the survey questionnaire via the online platform. Only twenty-two students returned the questionnaire with completion. Interestingly, this study found that Instagram was rated as the most favorite social media platform among this group of students. In addition, the major purpose of social media usage for these students was for making relationship. For time spent daily on social media, this study showed that students spent approximately 4-6 hours a day on social media. Also, this study found a statistically significant difference between students' nationalities on time spent on social media daily. However, since the sample size of this study was too small, the generalizability was limited.

Based on these literature reviews, most of them suggested expanding variables and adding more questions on social media behaviors. Therefore, this present study attempted to investigate social media usage behaviors by filling gap of past research with additional more questions related to social media usage behaviors of students. This led to the research question that " What were college students' social media usage behaviors in terms of years of social media acquaintance, time spent daily on social media, the most frequent period of time using social media daily, the most favorite applications, and the purpose of using social media?"

METHODOLOGY

This study was a survey study in which a self-administrated questionnaire was employed for data collection. A total of 109 freshman students at a selected public university agreed to participate in this study. Among these students, they were separated into three distinctive majors, which were management, accounting, and information system. Questionnaires were distributed to students in preparation classes prior to the beginning of the first semester. The newly developed questionnaire namely "social media behaviors and digital etiquette" were utilized as an instrument for measurement. This instrument contained two parts: personal profile and social media behaviors and digital etiquette. The first part of this instrument was used for data analysis in this study. A 7-item of check-list questions was developed to measure respondents' social media behaviors. These seven questions included gender, age, how long have you used social media (in years), time spent daily on social media, the most frequent period of time using social media daily, the most favorite applications, and the purpose of using social media.

To ensure quality of this instrument, content validity was utilized through the index of congruence method in which three experts in this area were asked to evaluate the validity of this questionnaire. Descriptive statistics and multiple response analysis were used for data analyses.

RESULTS

Analysis of this study demonstrated that female (72.5%) were the majority of respondents. Participants had average age of 18.94 years in which the lowest age of them was 18 years whereas the highest age was 22 years. The massive group of respondents was from management major (65.1%) followed by accounting major (27.5%) and information technology major (7.3%), respectively. The average years of using social media among these respondents were 7.49 years in which 4 years were the lowest and 13 years were the highest for the length of time using social media in years. This study also showed that participants spent 8.23 hours a day on social media in which 3 hours were found as the minimum time spent daily while 21 hours were reported as the maximum time spent on social media daily.

Respondents reported that they frequently used social media during the evening (30.9%) followed by afternoon (25.3%) and late night (20%). For the most popular social media application, the majority of these respondents used Facebook (43%) as a primary platform followed by Instagram (28%) and other social media such as YouTube and Google (18.7%). When asked about the purpose of social media usage, entertainment (30.9%) was reported as a primary purpose of using social media followed by information searching (26%) purpose and education purpose (22.3%). Table 1 displayed descriptive statistics and multiple response analyses.

Table 1: Frequency Distributions of Respondents' Personal Profiles and Social Media Behaviors (n = 109)

Personal Profiles	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	30	27.5%
Female	79	72.5%
Total	109	100%
Major		
Management	71	65.1%
Accounting	30	27.5%
Information Technology	8	7.3%
Total	109	100%
Time Spent Daily (Multiple Response)		
Moring	28	9.8%
Noon	40	14.0%
Afternoon	72	25.3%
Evening	88	30.9%
Late Night	57	20.0%
Total	285	100%
The Most Favorite Social Media Application (Multiple Response)		
Facebook	46	43.0%
YouTube	20	18.7%
Instagram	30	28.0%
Twitter	4	3.7%
Line	7	6.5%
Total	107	100.0%
The Purpose of Social Media Usage (Multiple Response)		
Entertainment	107	30.9%
Relationship	62	17.9%
Education	77	22.3%
Business	10	2.9%
Information	90	26.0%
Total	346	100.0%

Table 2 demonstrated the crosstabulation between gender and a regular period of time spent on social media usage. Male and female students reported that they mostly spent their evening on using social media. Afternoon was stated as the second most frequent period of time both genders spent on social media. Morning was reported as the least favorite period of time both males and females spent on using social media.

Table 2: Crosstabulation between Gender and a Regular Period of Time Spent on Social Media Usage

Gender		Regular Period of Time Spent on Social Media Usage					Total
		Morning	Noon	Afternoon	Evening	Late Night	
Male	Count	8	15	20	24	12	79
	% of Total	2.8%	5.3%	7.0%	8.4%	4.2%	27.7%
Female	Count	20	25	52	64	45	206
	% of Total	7.0%	8.8%	18.2%	22.5%	15.8%	72.3%
Total	Count	28	40	72	88	57	285
	% of Total	9.8%	14.0%	25.3%	30.9%	20.0%	100.0%

Table 3 displayed the crosstabulation between gender and the most favorite applications (social media). Male students indicated that their most favorite social media application was Facebook (10.3%) and Instagram (10.3%) followed by YouTube (6.5%).

Similarly, female students designated that their most favorite social media application was Facebook (43%) followed by Instagram (28.0%) and YouTube (18.7%). The least favorite social media application for both males and females was Twitter.

Table 3: Crosstabulation between Gender and the Most Favorite Application

Gender		The Most Favorite Applications					Total
		Facebook	YouTube	Instagram	Twitter	Line	
Male	Count	11	7	11	0	1	30
	% of Total	10.3%	6.5%	10.3%	0.0%	0.9%	28.0%
Female	Count	35	13	19	4	6	77
	% of Total	32.7%	12.1%	17.8%	3.7%	5.6%	72.0%
Total	Count	46	20	30	7	20	107
	% of Total	43.0%	18.7%	28.0%	6.5%	18.7%	100.0%

Table 4 showed the crosstabulation between gender and the primary purpose of social media usage. Findings indicated that both males and females had the same primary purpose of social media usage, which was

for entertainment while business purpose was found to be the least objective of social media usage for both genders.

Table 4: Crosstabulation between Gender and the Purpose of Social Media Usage

Gender		The Purpose of Social Media Usage					Total
		Entertainment	Relationship	Education	Business	Information	
Male	Count	29	17	16	4	20	86
	% of Total	8.4%	4.9%	4.6%	1.2%	5.8%	24.9%
Female	Count	78	45	61	6	70	
	% of Total	22.5%	13.0%	17.6%	1.7%	20.2%	75.1%
Total	Count	107	62	77	10	90	346
	% of Total	30.9%	17.9%	22.3%	2.9%	26.0%	100.0%

Table 5 demonstrated the crosstabulation between students' major and a regular period of time spent on social media usage. Findings showed that students with management major regularly spent their time in the evening for using social media (18.6%) followed by afternoon (17.2%) and late night (12.6%),

respectively. Similarly, accounting students often spent their evening for using social media (10.2%) followed by afternoon (7.0%) and late night (6.0%), respectively. IT students frequently spent their evening for using social media (2.1%) followed by late night (1.4%) and afternoon as well as morning (1.1%), respectively.

Table 5: Crosstabulation between Students' Major and a Regular Period of Time Spent on Social Media Usage

Major		Regular Period of Time Spent on Social Media Usage					Total
		Morning	Noon	Afternoon	Evening	Late Night	
Management	Count	22	31	49	53	36	191
	% of Total	7.7%	10.9%	17.2%	18.6%	12.6%	67.0%
Accounting	Count	3	8	20	29	17	77
	% of Total	1.1%	2.8%	7.0%	10.2%	6.0%	27.0%
IT	Count	3	1	3	6	4	17
	% of Total	1.1%	0.4%	1.1%	2.1%	1.4%	6.0%
Total	Count	28	40	72	88	57	285
	% of Total	9.8%	14.0%	25.3%	30.9%	20.0%	100.0%

Table 6 displayed the crosstabulation between students' major and the most favorite applications. Facebook played the dominant social media application for all students' majors (43%). Instagram application

was reported as the second most popular social media for students with management major (23.4%) followed by YouTube (10.3%), respectively while accounting students' second favorite social media application was

YouTube (7.5%) followed by Instagram (3.7%), respectively. Students with IT major reported that their second most favorite application was Line. Among these three major groups, Twitter was reported as the least favorite social media application.

Table 6: Crosstabulation between Students' Major and the Most Favorite Application

Major		The Most Favorite Applications					Total
		Facebook	YouTube	Instagram	Twitter	Line	
Management	Count	28	11	25	2	4	70
	% of Total	26.2%	10.3%	23.4%	1.9%	3.7%	65.4%
Accounting	Count	14	8	4	2	1	29
	% of Total	13.1%	7.5%	3.7%	1.9%	0.9%	27.1%
IT	Count	4	1	1	0	2	8
	% of Total	3.75%	0.9%	0.9%	0	1.9%	7.5%
Total	Count	46	4	30	7	20	107
	% of Total	43%	3.7%	28.0%	6.5%	18.7%	100%

Table 7 showed the crosstabulation between students' major and the primary purpose of social media usage. Findings showed that the primary purpose of students with management major was for entertainment (19.9%), followed by information searching (16.8%) and education purpose (14.5%), respectively. Likewise, accounting students used social media for entertainment purpose (8.7%) followed by information purpose (8.1%) and education purpose (6.4%), respectively. Students with IT major primarily utilized social media for entertainment purpose (2.3%) followed by education purpose (1.4%) and information purpose (1.2%), respectively.

Table 7: Crosstabulation between Students' Major and the Purpose of Social Media Usage

Gender		The Purpose of Social Media Usage					Total
		Entertainment	Relationship	Education	Business	Information	
Management	Count	69	42	50	7	58	226
	% of Total	19.9%	12.1%	14.5%	2.0%	16.8%	65.3%
Accounting	Count	30	18	22	2	28	100
	% of Total	8.7%	5.2%	6.4%	0.6%	8.1%	28.9%
IT	Count	8	2	5	1	4	20
	% of Total	2.3%	0.6%	1.4%	0.3%	1.2%	5.8%
Total	Count	107	62	77	10	90	346
	% of Total	30.9%	17.9%	22.3%	2.9%	26.0%	100.0%

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this present study was to examine college students' social media usage behaviors. Findings revealed that respondents had used social media platforms for about 7.49 years. The average time spent daily on social media application was 8.23 hours. This study also found that this group of college students frequently used social media during the evening. For the most popular social media application, the majority of these respondents used Facebook as a primary platform followed by Instagram and other social media such as YouTube and Google. The primary purpose of social media usage was for entertainment. The findings of this study were consistent with the prior studies and surveys in which Facebook was the highest use social media platform (Rahman, 2014; Ortiz-Ospina, 2019; Phanpinit & Kansirisin, 2019). Additionally, this study also supported the previous studies in terms of purpose of social media usage, which entertainment was rated as a primary purpose (Rahman, 2014; Al-Sharqi, Hashim, & Kutbi; 2015; Promsri, 2019). This study showed new findings on a regular period of time spent on social media in which evening was reported as the most frequent time spent by these college students.

For limitations of this study, this study gathered data from freshman students in three majors only. Hence, the next study should extend the sample size to students in different levels and majors in this selected university. Also, this study primarily focused on college students in a select public university, which may not be sufficient to generalize its findings to other studies. Thus, the future study should investigate social media usage of college students in other universities. In addition, it would be useful to compare the difference of social media usage between college students from public and private universities.

For research application, this selected university can gain many benefits from this study's findings. Firstly, since the average time spent daily on social media platform was more than 8 hours, the university should develop a hybrid course, which combines the traditional classroom and online class together. Secondly, as Facebook dominates all social media platform, according to this research's finding, the university should communicate and provide content related to education and learning through this application. Lastly, since students' major purpose of using social media was for entertainment, the university

should create activities through social media platforms that allow them to freely produce a variety of contents to increase the possibility of earning more incomes for the university.

Author Contribution

Dr. Chaiyaset Promsri developed the conceptual framework and scale measurement, collected data from management students, performed the computation, analyzed and interpreted data, and wrote the final manuscript for publication.

Dr. Suchira Chaigusin helped validate the instrumentation, collected data from IT students, and provided the feedback for the final manuscript.

Dr. Thanatas Tupmongkol helped validate the instrumentation, collected data from accounting students, and provided the feedback for the final manuscript.

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