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The Influence of Social Media on Customer's Perception: Case Study of PTT Public Company Limited (PTT)

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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this research were to study the influence of social media on customer's perception, case study PTT Public Company Limited (PTT) in order to measure the performance and propose the development approach. The samples were 400 PTT customers living in Thailand, aged over 18 years old and used social media in daily basis. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were conducted. For quantitative method, data was collected by simple random sampling through questionnaires. Frequency, percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation and Pearson's Correlation were applied as statistical analysis tools. Statistical significance levels were set at .01 and .05. For Qualitative method, open-ended questions, in-depth interview and online news about PTT were conducted by content analysis and descriptive method. The study indicated that PTT's social media had the potential to provide relatively positive information at a high level. This was good for the image and business of PTT. The suggestions for improvement were 1. It was new media that did not cover all users. Therefore, it should be used in conjunction with traditional media. 2. It should be organized, collected and integrated to be convenient to use. 3. There should be strategies to present it in a timely manner and be able to create a sense of togetherness. And 4. There should be a good content creation process, may be by using "3 F and 4 Steps of Content Circle" model to increase the positive impact and reduce the negative impact in order to enhance the customers to get good value from PTT.

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Introduction

Social media and social networks had become new marketing tools for companies where comments and attitudes of products and services were expressed [2]. These technologies were rapidly and widely developed and thus, became one of the important factors that influenced our daily lives. The influence of social media [7] also led to a specific behaviour called "online consumer behaviour" of which all goods and services are offered through E-mail, Facebook, YouTube, and social networks [19]. The successful social media related not only to a great communication channels but also excellent content marketing tools. They displayed not only advertisement but also brought to consideration, the influence, the perception, the reaction, and the outcome from target groups [1]. Therefore, this influence of social media was used by the company to adjust and develop their strategies. PTT Public Company Limited (PTT), the national oil company of Thailand, recognized the importance of these technologies. They established PTT ICT Solutions Company Limited to serve PTT Group the computer technology. In the year 2015, PTT announced 3 major strategies which were technology, sustainability and investment management. For technology, they spent not less than 3% of annual net profit on it including communication technology as well as driving their own innovation and patents to gain more than 20% of total income for PTT Group. For sustainability, they aimed to get 2% of total income from environmentally friendly products by the year 2020, reduced the concentration of greenhouse gas emissions to 5% from the year 2012-2020,

increased reforestation for carbon sequestration by 2.1 million tons per year, raised awareness of clean technology and innovation image and created understanding about energy issue among PTT stakeholders. For investment management, PTT aimed to be "Top Quartile ROIC in Asia-Pacific over cost of capital". Since PTT was both state enterprise and listed company in stock market, PTT had to balance the benefit of all stakeholders (country, social community, shareholder, customer, partner and employee) to gain the acceptance and appreciation from Thai people. As a result, PTT applied social media to help accomplish these missions. Social media played an important role for PTT not only in business but also in corporate image. Therefore, in the year 2016, PTT conducts the strategy of building "pride and treasure of Thailand" as follows ; [16]

- Integrated management for stakeholders in both reactive and proactive ways such as impact assessment.
- Strengthened SPIRIT values from inside of PTT staffs (SPIRIT stands for; S = Synergy, P = Performance excellence, I = Innovation, R = Responsibility for society, I = Integrity & Ethics, T = Trust & Respect) and be PTT Brand Ambassador.
- Conducting business under good governance (CG)

Social media was the crucial tool that involved in all missions above whereas it's influence had never been earnestly evaluated. Therefore, this research aimed to get the answer and suggestions for development.

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Figure 1. PTT Public Company Limited (PTT).

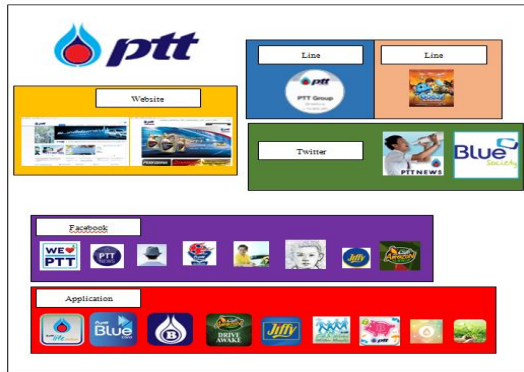


Figure 2. PTT Social media.

PTT Social medial

- Website www.pttplc.com
- Website www.pttlubricants.pttplc.com
- Website www.pttbluecard.com
- Facebook "PTT News"
- Facebook "We Love PTT"
- Facebook "PTT Blue Society"
- Facebook "Tevin at PTT"
- Facebook "Café Amazon by PTT"
- Facebook "Jiffy Thailand"
- Facebook "Fellowship of PTT"
- Facebook "PTT Rayong Academy"
- Facebook "PTT Motor Sport"
- LINE "PTT Group"
- LINE "PTT GAS"
- LINE "PTT Blue Card"
- LINE "PTT Volunteer Club"
- Instagram "We Love PTT"
- Instagram "We love PTT on Tour"
- Twitter "PTT News"
- Application "We love PTT on Tour"
- Application "PTT Blue Card"
- Application "PTT Oil Price Lifestyle"
- Application "Jiffy Shop"
- Application "PTT 84 Tambon"
- Application "PTT Reforest"
- Application "PTT i-Pocket HD"
- Application "PTT Insight"
- Application "Amazon Drivewake"
- YouTube "Godji the Adventure" etc.

From literature review, the customers' perception here referred to 1. corporate image perception and 2. Business perception. The corporate image perception was measured by management and PTT activity whereas the business perception was measured by products and services.

Research Objectives

1. To study the social media influence of PTT management and PTT activity on the corporate image perception.
2. To study the social media influence of PTT products and services on the business perception.
3. To study the social media influence of customers' demographic characteristics on the corporate image perception and the business perception.
4. To study the social media influence of PTT social media tools on the corporate image perception and the business perception.
5. To provide guidelines for developing PTT social media and managing the impact from external social media

Hypothesis

- H1.** The social media influence of PTT management and PTT activity was correlated with the corporate image perception.
- H2.** The social media influence of PTT products and services was correlated with the business perception.
- H3.** The different customers' demographic characteristics influenced different corporate image perception and different business perception.
- H4.** The different PTT social media tools influenced different corporate image perception and different business perception.

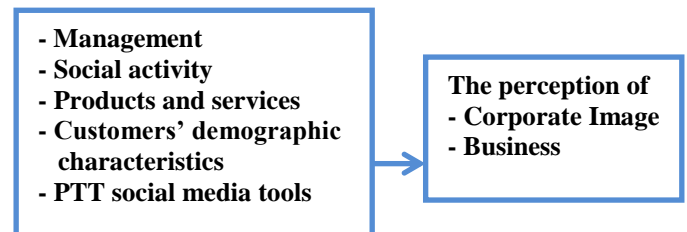


Figure 3. Conceptual framework.

Scope of Research

1. The content of this research was to study the influence of social media on customers' perception: a case study of the PTT Public Company Limited. The results of perception was measured in either positive or negative side and at high or low level.
2. The samples were 400 PTT customers in Thailand (calculated by Yamane's formula), aged over 18 years old and used social media in daily basis.
3. The time duration of research was 2 years. (2016 – 2017)

Qualitative Tool

1. **The questionnaires which were divided into 6 parts.**
 - Part 1: The demographic characteristics of the respondents
 - Part 2: The use of general social media
 - Part 3: The accessibility of PTT Social Media
 - Part 4: The information perception from PTT Social Media
 - Part 5: The influence level of PTT Social Media

Quantitative Tools

1. **Opened-ended questions at the end of questionnaires**
2. **In-depth interview of 12 people**
3. **Content analysis of online news about PTT**
(6 months data from October 2016-March 2017)

Result

- The result from questionnaires were summarized as follows ;

Most of the samples were female, age between 19-30 years old, single, bachelor degree, working in the field of Civil servant or state enterprise, average monthly income was less than 20,000 Baht. The most PTT products or services used was "Oil".

The channel mostly used to get information was television. The channel mostly used to access social media was mobile phone with the frequency of 2-3 hours a day and with the cost of 301-500 Baht a month.

The PTT social media mostly use was LINE application "PTT Group, Godji LINE Sticker" of which the information and corporate image they trusted were at a high level. Although most of the samples received information from outside PTT, they trusted it at medium level.

The perception about PTT management was at a high level and the most well known topic was "PTT secured the country's energy by providing sufficient energy at reasonable prices"

The perception about PTT products and services was at a high level and the well-known topic was "Oil type in PTT Gas Station were : Gasoline 91, 95, Gasohol (Gasoline + Alcohol) 91, 95, E20, E85 diesel, diesel B5, HyForce premium diesel, palm diesel and natural gas for vehicles "

The perception about PTT activities was at a medium level and the well-known topic was "One Million Rai Reforestation Project to Honor HM the King (1994-1997)"

The influence level of PTT Social Media

The influence of PTT social media tools on the communication in the positive side was at a medium level and the well-known topic was "PTT social media made it easy for customers to make decisions." The influence of PTT social media tools on the communication in the negative side was at a medium level and the well-known topic was "There is too much social media to understand and it confused the customers"

Table 4. The level of social media tools influence on PTT communication

Influence of social media tools	Mean	Result
In the Positive side	3,2167	Medium
In the Negative side	2,6089	Medium

- **The result form open-ended questions at the end of the questionnaires were summarized as follows ;**

1. How did you know PTT social media ?

Most of the customers knew LINE "PTT Group" because of PTT's free sticker downloads. Some knew from using products and services in the gas station.

2. what did you think about the image of PTT social media ?

PTT social media was fast coverage and responsiveness for PTT business. PTT should provide this tool to communicate and serve customers' life style.

3. Were there any more social media that you would like PTT to provide ?

There were so many kinds of PTT social media that should be systematically collected for convenience to use or integrated as each social media had its own featured.

4. Were you familiar with PTT products or services quality without any suggestion ?

Most of the samples were satisfied by the quality of PTT products and services especially, PTT gas stations which were one stop service. However, they did not feel the significant of oil quality when comparing with other brands.

5. In case you would like to fill gasoline, were PTT the first priority ? Why and How ?

The answers were "Yes". Not only the convenience, PTT was considered to be the major energy service provider as its wide distribution, cleanliness and good services.

- **The result from in-depth interview were summarized as follows ;**

1. What kind of social media did you use in your organization ? Why ?

"LINE" was the most popular social media used for communication although it was unofficial, It "worked". Another one was E-mail which was officially used as its ability of content delivery and kept well secret.

2. In your opinion, did social media influence your business or your organization?

Social media influenced all organizations. It was the effective tool for communication. It made work and life easier, bridged the gap between people, saved cost, created new services that answered to consumers' need and most of all, it did not belong to anyone but everyone.

3. From the information in social media, what did you think about PTT ? Did it influence your perception about PTT or about the use of products and services ?

PTT was recognized as the national energy company who well took care of society. Although there were some negative issues from the antagonist, the fact was more important and people could think by themselves. Lastly, the most affective factors of choosing products and services were quality and price.

4. How did you feel about the social media of PTT ? Were there any suggestion to improve to meet your requirement ?

PTT provided a lot of social media for customers but some customers did not know. There should be center to manage and promote. As for negative issues management, it should be fast and focus. Moreover, the content should be fine and comprehensive.

5. Comparing the social media of PTT with other energy companies', what was the ranking of PTT ?

PTT used more social media than any other energy companies, for marketing, PR and clarify the negative issues. It seemed that PTT was always political victim. PTT used the strategy of explaining the fact and CSR on and on through social media to relieve negative impact. Therefore, it was certain that PTT social media was in the first ranking.

- **The result of Content analysis of online news about PTT were summarized as follow ;**

It was found that most of the online news related to PTT during October 2016 - March 2017 was 59.22 % positive (general issue : positive issue : negative issue = 26.44 : 59.22 : 14.34) Although most of the content was about the clarification of negative issues. However, after clarification, PTT usually took this opportunity to added positive news such as PR, CSR activities, marketing promotion in the same occasion that boosted the positive issues.

Hypothesis Testing

H1. The social media influence of PTT management and social activity was positive correlated with **the corporate image perception** at a high level of the confidence of 0.10.

H2. The social media influence of PTT products and services was positive correlated with **the business perception** at a high level of the confidence of 0.10.

H3. The different customers' demographic characteristics **did not influence** different corporate image perception and different business perception. The sig. value was higher than the statistical significance level 0.05.

H4. The different PTT social media tools **did not influence** different corporate image perception and different business perception. The sig. value was higher than the statistical significance level 0.05.

Discussion

The discussion was analyzed according to the objectives of research as follows.

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing Result 1 - 2

Influence	R	Sig. (2-tailed)
- Management	.702	.000**
- Social activity	.611	.000**
- Products and services	.681	.000**

** Statistical significance level 0.10

1. To study the social media influence of PTT management and social activity on the corporate image perception.

As the management and the social activity influenced the corporate image perception. The management was such as the organization, vision, mission, the role in stock market, the investment etc. These performances were attacked by the NGO who did not agree with energy policy and this influenced negative corporate image. The social activity was such as PR, CSR, activities which influenced positive corporate image. However, the result of research came out to be positive correlated with the corporate image perception at a high level at the confidence of 0.10. It was because "PTT got answers for every negative issue". PTT also provided the application called "Hot Issues" which included all information packages for all negative classic cases. This was one of the ways that created customer value. This model was consistent with Chanapa Lertwongwongsa (2015), which described the importance of "Social Value", "Emotional Value" and "Customer Value" that could contribute not only good image but also good attitude for products and services.

2. To study the social media influence of PTT products and services on the business perception.

The products and services influenced the business perception. PTT used both direct and indirect social media for promoting products and services, direct social media was like hard sell such as motors sport, Lubricant, Café Amazon, or other marketing events, indirect social media was such as sponsor football, golf, boxing, providing area in PTT gas station for farmers to sell rice, OTOP, visiting the Cafe Amazon Coffee Roaster etc. This model was consistent with Yi Zhang (2015) in "Meaning and Message". The way PTT had done for society was being interpreted and extended to be a positive sense of products and services more than just recognizing the corporate image. Moreover, the model PTT quickly managed all negative issues by giving "fact", kept on clarification the arguments and maintained good image, were consistent with Kasikorn Research Center, "how entrepreneurs can use social networking website as a CRM (Customer Relationship Management)". The result of research came out to be positive correlated with the business perception at a high level of the confidence of 0.10.

3. To study the social media influence of customers' demographic characteristics on the corporate image perception and the business perception.

Different customers' demographic characteristics did not influence different corporate image perception and different business perception. The sig. value was significantly higher than the statistical significance level 0.05. It showed that PTT customers of all ages could access social media equally

because internet and mobile phones were common things that everyone can afford and got in touch with all application freely.

4. To study the social media influence of PTT social media tools on the corporate image perception and the business perception.

The different PTT social media tools did not influence different corporate image perception and different business perception. The sig. value was higher than the statistical significance level 0.05. The influence level was at the medium level. That meant PTT social media tools no matter what applications such as PTT website, Facebook "PTT News", LINE "PTT Group", Application "PTT Insight" and Application "PTT News" could influence the corporate image and the business perception equally at the medium level. Some customers did not know PTT social media. However, the qualitative result said that the positive news issues were more than the negative ones. This model was consistent with George & Michael (1993, p. 128) that people opened mind for all social media from all sources. (PTT, NGO, etc.) Therefore, PTT had to use every social media to do their best to communicate their corporate image. Besides, all marketing applications could also remind customers of brand such as LINE "PTT Godji", Application "PTT Life Station", Application "PTT Blue Card" Website Café Amazon etc.

5. To provide guidelines for developing PTT social media and managing the impact from external social media

PTT should collect all social media for convenient use or integrate many applications to be "all in one" application to combine the strength. This model was consistent with Seree Wongmonta (1998), "Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)" to diversify the access channels of maximum utility for target consumers.

For more efficient use of social media and managing the impact from external social media, The researcher analyzed and synthesised the result of this research both qualitative and quantitative to be "3 F and 4 Steps of Content Circle" model as follow;

Conceptual Development

Based on research result, the researcher would like to introduce "3 F and 4 Steps of Content Circle" for managing social media. "3F" was the strategy in presenting social media which are Focus, Fast and Feeling as follow ;



Figure 6. The 3F model

1. Focus

Focus was the process to concentrate on providing specific content to make the highest impact.

2. Fast

For marketing, It had to be faster than competitors. For clarifying the hot issue, it had to be faster or even pro-active.

3. Feeling

The social media should contain of fact and feeling. Social media should have the art in presenting to make it easier for subscribers to socialize and subscribe.

"4 Steps of Content Circle" was the process to create content which are capture the news movement, scrounge the

positive news area, Scramble and remove negative news area, Integrate to create news content as follows ;

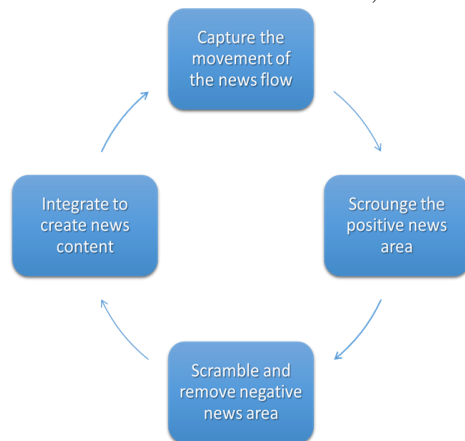


Figure 7. The 4 Steps of Content Circle model

Suggestions

Suggestions for the development of PTT social media

1. PTT social media was new media that did not cover all users. Therefore, it should be used in conjunction with traditional media.

2. It should be organized, collected and integrated to be convenient to use.

3. There should be strategies to present it in a timely manner and be able to create a sense of togetherness.

4. There should be a good content creation process, like “**3 F and 4 Steps of Content Circle**” model to increase the positive impact and reduce the negative impact in order to enhance the customers to get good value from PTT.

Suggestions for the next research

1. This research focused on online media while PTT also used offline media such as newspapers, radio and television. Therefore, in the next research, there should be the study of both online and offline media together.

2. In the next research. There should be the study of each category of social media in-depth or make comparative studies for improvement.

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