

Communication Via Self-disclosure Behavior of Micro-influencers on Social Media in Thailand

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Abstract

Technology and human way of life have changed through eras and time, just like business operations that require marketing in order to develop to have their spaces in the consumers' minds. It can be seen that with the time passes, marketing communication tools also change. Currently, it is unavoidable to rely on internet technology to help in the marketing process through the use marketing communication tools called "Marketing Communication", done through social media. The website has created a model of society, allowing consumers to search for information on their own based on the direct experiences of those who have used that products, influential people in ideas or influencers, which play a huge role in the distribution of news and information. Therefore, various agencies/ organizations are persuading these influencers to participate in activities, organized to help. The influencer will publish information and create word-of-mouth online. As the importance of the behavior of the group of people that are classified as micro-influencers have increased rapidly, information dissemination through micro-influencers has become an important tool in communication that marketers rely on by using consumers to communicate with consumers. Therefore, there are studies of forms of identity disclosure, level of disclosure, social capital, and social support of self-disclosure behavior of individuals, who are micro-influencer. It is beneficial to entrepreneurs, including marketers to study about aforementioned topics in order to plan communication to consumers by choosing to use consumers as messengers in order to make that communication most effective. The research was conducted in-depth interviews with 30 micro-influencers on social media via Facebook, between 24-38 years old, with 500 - 10,000 followers. The research found that Social support is the main reason that micro-influencers have revealed themselves on social media via Facebook. Meanwhile, it is also a way to learn about self-disclosure forms on social networks of influential people at the micro level or micro-influencers on order to be used as a tool for marketing communication in the current marketing world, especially the form of marketing communication in Thailand through social media.

Keywords: communication, self-disclosure behavior, micro-influencers, social media

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduce the Problem

Nowadays, marketing communication tools have transformed whether the usage form and reaching the target audience. The use of each type of communication tools depends on a situation.(Duncan, 2005) Marketing communication tools that have been used include public relations, advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing, online marketing, marketing communication activities, and salespeople create unavoidable circumstances to rely on technology through the internet to help with marketing operations via marketing communication tools called "Marketing Communication", which is done through social media.(Blakeman, 2007) Advertising is a tool in the marketing communication process that has a variety of advertising forms and is adjusted according to the marketing strategies at that time in order to reach target groups or consumers as much as possible. With the advancement of technology at the present, it increases the efficiency in communication. There are ways to search for information; chat and exchange ideas with people on the internet freely. According to the survey of internet users' behavior in 2018, Thai people use the internet for up to 10 hours 5 minutes per day as a result of increasing their transition to digital life. (ETDA, 2018) For search channels that have the highest traffic rates in

the top 3 ranks are Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter for up to 3 hours 30 minutes per day while watching streaming videos such as YouTube or Line TV has an average usage hour of 2 hours and 35 minutes per day. The use of applications for chatting, such as Messenger and LINE, is on average of 2 hours per day. The average of online gaming is 1 hour 51 minutes per day and the average of reading articles or books online is 1 hour 31 minutes per day.

Moreover, Thailand Zocial Award 2018 shows the data of online media usage of Thai people throughout the year 2018 that the number of people posting public messages via social media has reached 3,600,000,000 messages per day. Most of them are comments or expressions. (WeAreAnthology, 2017) There are many more types of online social tools such as Facebook, Twitter, Line or Instagram. These channels are powerful tools for marketing through social media tools. With the consumption behavior of Thai people including the frequency of using different types of media, it can be seen that the number of internet usage steadily increasing. The behavior of finding information for things is inevitable. In the past, we often asked for information directly from the sales staff, which might have to waste traveling time to inquire from many sources and often received unbiased information, causing confusion in buying decisions. Nowadays, the internet plays a role in everyday life, especially websites that have been created as a model for society, allowing consumers to easily search for products on their own based on the experience of those, who have used that product easily.

The studies have found that Self-disclosure is the main to interpersonal communication. Which is the transition from internal communication to interpersonal. (Prasitwisate G., 2014) Just to let people know the identity of the person and represent a greater mutual trust. It makes the communication more targeted and more effective (Roengsak P., 2014) such as product reviews that are credible and believed to be based on actual user experience. (Trakooltum P., 2015) It's also able to effectively access the ideas of followers in matters that they have true expertise. Also, it will be a feature of sharing relevant experiences on social media (Sakukritteenun K. & Weerakit N., 2018) just wanting to exist in one society and being widely accepted and known, resulting in interest and a lot of followers. The important role of online communities encourages users to reveal personal information, thoughts, and emotions to other users of social networks. (Mazer, Murphy & Simonds, 2007), (Chen, Y., 2016) Which is in the same direction as the marketing in Thailand that the micro-influencer commonly used in communications or content consists of. Personal Facebook 58%, Instagram 25%, Facebook Page 12% and Twitter 5% (Angkulanon R., 2018) As a result, marketers are beginning to see the importance of micro-influencers. (Ritveeradej K., 2019) Competition from current marketing researchers believe that in the same direction. Micro-influencers with a rapidly increasing number and is an important tool in communication for marketers. Therefore, conducting research and study the self-disclosure behavior of individuals with micro-influencers to apply the tools of marketing communication in the pace of consumer behavior in Thailand.

1.2 The Role of Influencers

A group of people with powerful influences on thoughts. These marketers are called "Influencers", which can be found online. They play a great role in the distribution of news or information because they have their groups of followers, who are interested and trust as well as are ready to receive news and information from the influencers. Therefore, it can be seen that various departments or organizations, including brands and services, have persuaded these influencers to participate in activities, organized to help disseminate information and create word of mouth online in order to be public relations or advertisement of products. This is one of the strategies that marketers use most in this era. The information dissemination is done by celebrities, famous people in public relations marketing in order to convince target customers to believe or follow through the opinions of others that are credible or proficient in what is said. As shown in Figure 1. trend of the use of marketing communication content that has grown from the development of content marketing has changed the format for creating engagement. Nowadays, when people understand more about marketing Information from brand owners or the use of power influencers. Whether celebrities, gurus, or bloggers May have an influence only in the dimension of awareness creation. The use of influencers to relay marketing messages is a growing concern for marketers while most brands allocate budgets for online, especially in terms of using the influencers to support marketing contents about 70%. Currently, there are a number of reviewers on social media, more than 8,500 people, up from 6,000 people last year or the number of campaigns that have been used in the past year more than 2,000 campaigns that created views of products more than 12,000 reviews. (Ritveeradej, 2019) Being asked to review or recommend products by a company, an organization or an agency causes separation between reviews from experiences, genuine opinions or an employment from a product brand. Therefore, it causes consumers to have more ambiguity with product reviews. Currently, 86% of consumers generally do not believe in what the brand says or what the brand advertises. However, 92% of consumers believe what ordinary people or ordinary

consumers talk about brands, especially from friends or close people. Nowadays, consumers prefer content more than advertising, especially content that come from “Micro-influencers”. (Angkulanon, 2018)

CONTENT MARKETING

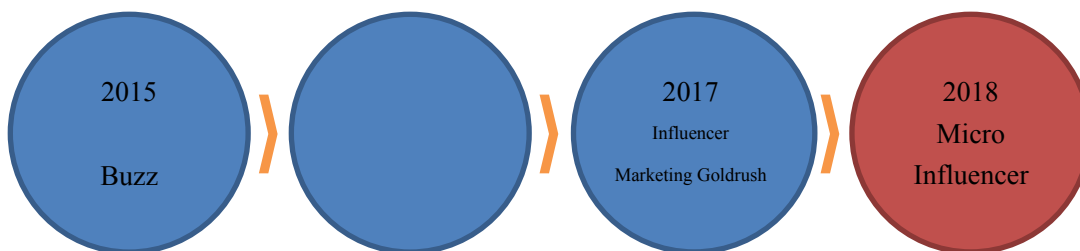


Figure 1. Trends in using content marketing communications

Adapted from <https://www.brandbuffet.in.th/2018/08/growth-of-micro-influencer-content-marketing>

A micro-influencer is a consumer who can be anyone with 500 - 10,000 followers on social media channels. They may be interesting and creative in their opinions. These people will express their views. Therefore, it is regarded as the power of word of mouth to convince people more. Although, through personal communication to friends and followers, there are only a few hundred or thousands, but there are high involvement or participation and relatively high organic contents, which make the investment worthwhile. It is also the communication of real data from the use of real products by consumers before being shared or reviewed online, especially using reviews to help spread the contents to online media such as blogs, Facebook, fan pages, or Instagram as shown in figure 2. the current channel of self-identification of micro-influencers. When it comes to the information from real users through the media, the reviewers will be even more reliable. Doing a review via the web board or online communities may be perceived as a brand that speaks more than consumers themselves, which makes it not very attractive to today's consumer groups. So, at present, we see micro-influencers scatter along online channels through many different social media platforms.

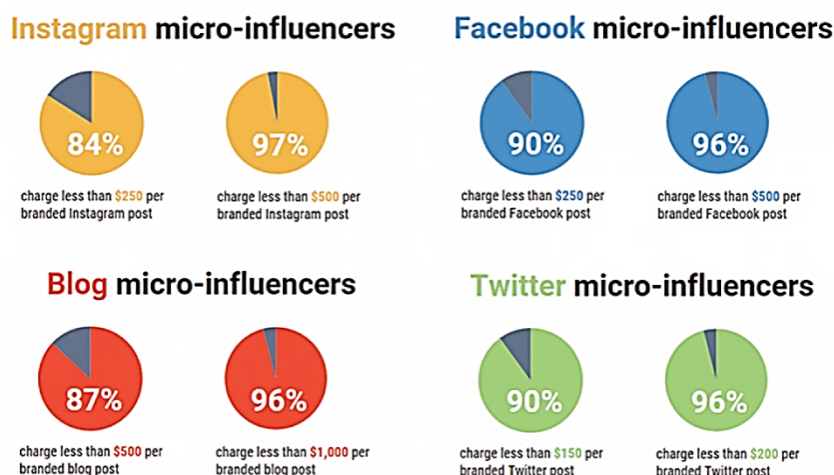


Figure 2. Current channel for self-identification of micro-influencers.

Adapted from <https://www.adlibweb.com/how-to-use-micro-influencers-to-increase-your-product-credibility/>

The growth trend of this group of people is increasing in number because they do not always want money, but want to be a well-know person in society. They will develop themselves and try to create good and diverse content to attract readers until there are many followers. Confidence or acceptance until leading to a purchasing decision will be the duty of the group of micro-influencers or ordinary people, who will tell themselves about

effectiveness or feedback of a product. There are different forms of reviews or recommendations for products and services depending on personal lifestyles, making 2018 the golden year of using micro-influencers as an important tool in marketing of marketers and brands from collecting hundreds of thousands of pages. (Thailand Social Awards, 2018) The rank of the trend that drives the most participation is the use of space on social networks to express unlimited behavior and emotions. People can set a personal history, tell a story, post pictures, comments, forward information, search for information, visit other users' pages, and build relationships by easily communicating with others, which are users of online social networks around the world. Online communities play an important role in encouraging users to share basic personal information, thoughts, and emotions with other online social network users. (Mazer, Murphy & Simonds, 2007) It is an important factor in establishing the relationship between the micro-influencers with followers, as well as other users in social networks that were previously known or later known as "self-disclosure".

2. Method

This research aims to study the self-disclosure behavior in online social networks of people, who are classified as micro-influencer. This study is a qualitative research, conducted by collecting data through in-depth interviews. The target group are qualified individuals, who are classified as micro-influencers on social media via personal Facebook channels, with reviews or recommendations on their Facebook pages, both female and male, aged between 24-38 years, which is the sample population of this research. Therefore, it is defined as a group of people with 500 - 10,000 followers, who like product reviews that are real-life experiences by telling the story of the feelings after using a product or product according to their preferences; they are not a celebrity group, but are people from a group with knowledge and passion in a particular subject, who are able to spread news or introduce knowledge to people close by mouth or from communication via online media. The purposes of the research are to study communication behavior, patterns, levels and dimensions of self-disclosure on online social networks, factors and forms of social capital, to receive social support, and to be a guideline for learning self-disclosure patterns on social networks, which can be adapted to create tools for marketing communication in the future as well. The questions for use in the in-depth interview process were designed to form the questions for use in the interview as a question to lead the issue. The advantages of this kind of question is subject to questions or issues in an interview. It's a descriptive question by allowing respondents to tell stories or experiences so that other questions follow naturally. (Kvale S., 2006) The questionnaire contains questions as follows:

Table 1. Questions about communication through self-disclosure behavior of micro-influencers on social media in Thailand

1. Questions about identity disclosure on social media via personal Facebook
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the form of anonymity on personal Facebook? - What are the most common forms of identity disclosure? <p style="text-align: center;">What is a form of anonymity on social media through your Facebook page to review products? and how often does it appear in that manner?</p>
2. Questions about the level of identity disclosure On social media via personal Facebook
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What information did you tell your friends in social networks or followers? <p style="text-align: center;">What are the characteristics of the experiences that occur from living to be publicized or told to friends or followers on social media via Facebook?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the characteristics of the experiences that result from product use that can affect reviews, recommendations, or word-of-mouth on social media?
3. Questions about social capital awareness in choosing to use social media communication via personal Facebook channels
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What happened to your communications or reviews on Facebook? - Facebook for you is considered a communication channel that shows what kind of relationship with friends or people in your online social network?
4. Questions regarding social support that result in product reviews or recommendations via social media via personal Facebook
<p style="text-align: center;">Why do you choose communication or discussions, comments, or expressions via social media through Facebook?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What do you feel about the feeling that occurs between you and your followers on social networks that result in product reviews? or current product recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For what reasons did your ongoing identification or review continue?

3. Results

The disclosure on social networks found that most micro-influencers in this research are female, totaling 13 persons aged between 25-33 years, engaged in private business, followed by private company employees. There are some, who are self-employed. They have behavior of using Facebook every day and they used to review or recommend products on social media via personal Facebook channels, averaging 2-3 times/month. Only some are the male population, aged 30 years and 38 years and are self-employed, have self-disclosure behavior through social media on a personal Facebook channel on a regular basis and used to review product reviews on an average of 1-2 times/month.

The in-depth interview could be summarized in 4 parts as follows

Part 1: For behavior of using Facebook, forms of self-disclosure of micro-influencers via social media on personal Facebook channels.

It was found that micro-influencers have a form of self-disclosure via social media on Facebook, which personal information could be classified into 3 groups, arranged in order from the popular formats for self-disclosure as follows:

1) The format for posting images and composing texts. Every micro-influencer is revealed themselves through the form of picture posting and writing accompanying texts on their Facebook regularly. It is a form that is used continuously and frequently.

2) The format of Facebook lives together with posting pictures and writing some articles, some micro-influencers chose the type of self-disclosure by using the tools that Facebook already has, such as live streaming and posting images, and writing accompanying texts.

3) The format of making video clips together with posting images, and write accompanying texts, some micro-influencers chose the type of self-disclosure by shooting video clips and distributing them on Facebook together with posting pictures and writing accompanying texts.

Part 2: Characteristics of information, content, issues or stories in the discussion, comment Messages in conversations with friends or followers on Facebook

It was found that micro-influencers have a level of self-disclosure based on the personal information disclosed on a personal Facebook page, posting comments, sharing personal experiences, including the content of the story that has been revealed to friends or followers on the Facebook page to recognize information, content and issues or stories in the conversation comments with friends or followers on Facebook, which could be divided into 2 groups as follows:

1) General Story-related Topics : Disclosing the true basics about a micro-influencer that is revealed on Facebook. Most of the information is about name-surname, date-month-year of birth, workplace, address and job title. Disclosing information or posting messages that express emotions and feelings personalities of micro-influencers such as the likes, passion, hatred and fear that the micro-influencers experience in each period and reveal it on Facebook. Do not want to reveal himself/herself. But, there is writing information or posting confidential information or deep feelings inside their own Facebook, however, do not want to reveal to friends or followers on social media (on Facebook) by knowing the privacy status that others will not see themselves.

2) Topics about Product Reviews and Products: Most micro-influencers do not involve personal emotions or feelings when expressing or reviewing products, just introduce a general introduction of the product objectively, not particularly tight to one side. However, there are some that bring emotions into product reviews, which shows likes and dislikes, but not very profound.

Part 3: Relationship Levels with Friends or Followers of Micro-influencers on Facebook .

Most micro-influencers have close interaction with followers on Facebook in which the relationship arises from the exchange of mutual benefits through various forms of communication that Facebook has, such as sharing, chatting, commenting, posting, liking, sending messages, and broadcasting live. There is a connection between each other. It was discovered that the relationship that occurred from the presence on the face of the micro-Influencers. There are two types of communication objectives.

1) To communicate with friends; most micro-influencers have Facebook as a way to keep in touch with old friends that are long or far away. Friends that are close, intimate, and frequently communicate via Facebook - There is an exchange of information with each other all the time. Also yes, Facebook is a channel to follow the stories and update the news of yourself and friends or people, who follow as a way to provide help, share news, experiences, and in supporting activities.

2) To make new friends and create a new society; some micro-influencers use Facebook as a means for contacting work, making new friends, having a new society on Facebook. Set your profile to public, allowing anyone on the Facebook network to be able to view posts and share stories. Have a close relationship with friends or followers. Only some people only have a relationship with a friend or follow-up person, who is not as close as they should be, which most followers or friends on Facebook are due to the love of the work.

Part 4: Reasons for Causing Self-disclosure on Facebook and Product reviews or Recommendations.

Every micro-influencer has self-disclosure behavior because they receive support for items and compensation for product reviews or recommendations. It was found that self-disclosure on social media on Facebook was caused by their deep feelings to want to exist and be accepted and received praise from other people. Only some of the micro-influencers have revealed themselves on Facebook because of wanting to be a contributor and helping friends and followers on their Facebook on

1) For things and compensation for product reviews, there were reasons for self-disclosure and Facebook product reviews revealed that micro-influencers are supported by friends, people in the network on their

Facebook, companies, hiring, and compensation from the organization or product owners to review the product on their Facebook.

2) Want to exist and get attention; self-disclosure on social networks through the micro-influencer Facebook page is caused by self-esteem and wanting to be someone who gets attention regarded and is a famous person on a wide range of online social networks, rather than receiving compensation. When creating content and there is an update on their Facebook page, that content can be quickly multiplied and expanded by sharing or forwarding to a network of friends or followers. Also, when the conversation began to respond with a friend or follower to comment, resulting in a feeling that he/she is an important person and this creates the desire to make reviews, and make a person want to think of more and more new content.

3) To be the information provider; a micro-influencer reviews products through his/her Facebook page just because friends or followers on Facebook like to ask about his/her experience, knowledge, and skills that arise from his/her own specialization. In order to make Facebook their source of information with friends and followers in helping people who want to know. When it is done continuously, it makes micro-influencers come to mind and the intention to bring stories or experiences to share in order to tell to friends to share the information they have found and shared with others.

4. Discussion

Forms of communication to reveal themselves on social media networks created by social capital and social support. (Panos D., 2014) As a result, there are now many people, who reveal themselves in various forms on social networks. People can create and exchange information by sharing information via social networking websites in the form of images, videos, text files to encourage participation and self-disclosure to friends or followers, which can create good relationships with each other as well as self-disclosure also affects intimacy, familiarization, and trusting. There are different forms of self-disclosure of micro-influencers. With content that needs to be communicated to control and formulate to show identity and personality, different aptitudes, and preferences as for the level of self-disclosure, every micro-influencer has wide and deep self-disclosure that clearly demonstrates his/her identity by considering information. Or the story revealed on their Facebook, which indicates the identity of the basic information that is disclosed must be from the inside. The expression of the sincerity of the messengers that communicate to the audience so that the micro-influencer is able to maintain a relationship that affects the intimacy of the micro-influencer and followers, which will increase respectively; this could be developed to be more intimate. However, it requires a period of time for the communication partners to disclose more information to each other in the form of social capital, maintaining relationships and strengthening relationships with friends rather than looking for new friends or having new societies in order to build, develop and maintain relationships with members in the network with the goal of exchanging mutual benefits by using the method of data update, new stories, and create a closer relationship with a greater number of topics and content that has been written on Facebook for self-disclosure in terms of social support. The main reason for micro-influencers to expose themselves on social networks via Facebook, whether material, things or rewards in various forms are factors in self-disclosure. However, seeing the value and the need to exist, being recognized and praised on social networks are also important factors in the continuous disclosure of micro-influencers by developing methods of communication and self-expression in order to continually attract interest from friends and followers. In addition, education could enable learning and understanding of self-disclosure forms of micro-influencers and could be adapted in order to choose the right person to use as a marketing communication tool of the product appropriately, especially in the environment of marketing communication in Thailand.

Future research directions should study the revelation of their own micro-flute Ensor through other channels that are popular or not popular at the time, to reach a multi-channel subscriber. Also, it should study and analyzes content on a variety of factors related to incentives to encourage the behavior confirmation of followers. Including the study followed a survey on the influence that affects the credibility of the first micro-flute Ensor behavior reassessed.

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