

# A Content Analysis of a University's Communication Campaign and Word-of-Mouth Communications Among Facebook Users

## การวิเคราะห์เนื้อหาแคมเปญการสื่อสารของมหาวิทยาลัย และการสื่อสารแบบปากต่อปากระหว่างผู้ใช้เฟซบุ๊ก

Viriya Taecharungroj\* วิริยะ เตชะรุ่งโรจน์\*  
Kaniss-un Manopimoke\*\* กนิษศ้อนน์ มโนพิมอกษ์\*\*

### Abstract

The objectives of this research are to investigate the videos in Mahidol University's brand communication campaign, "The Cancer Campaign" during June and July 2017, and to identify the types of communications by the university and among the audience. This research employed inductive content analysis to identify content types from 36 videos, 299 comments, and 155 shares. The data were collected in September 2017 from the 'Mahidol Channel' Facebook page. The authors identified three types of videos, namely, 'experts', 'patients', and 'participants', and 17 types of comments and shares.

13

---

\*Assistant Professor of Marketing at Mahidol University International College,  
Nakhon Pathom, Thailand Email: [viriya.tae@mahidol.edu](mailto:viriya.tae@mahidol.edu)

\*ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์สาขาวิชาการตลาด วิทยาลัยนานาชาติ มหาวิทยาลัยมหิดล 999 ถนนพุทธมณฑลสาย 4  
ศาลายา พุทธมณฑล นครปฐม 73170 ช่องทางการติดต่อ : [viriya.tae@mahidol.edu](mailto:viriya.tae@mahidol.edu)

\*\* Head of Corporate Communication Section, Mahidol University, Nakhon Pathom, Thailand  
Email: [kanissun.man@mahidol.ac.th](mailto:kanissun.man@mahidol.ac.th)

\*\*หัวหน้าฝ่ายสื่อสารองค์กร มหาวิทยาลัยมหิดล 999 ถนนพุทธมณฑลสาย 4 ศาลายา พุทธมณฑล  
นครปฐม 73170 ช่องทางการติดต่อ: [kanissun.man@mahidol.ac.th](mailto:kanissun.man@mahidol.ac.th)

From the findings, 'answer' and 'question' are the two most common types of comment, whereas 'approval' is the most common type of share. Although it is commonly known that social media allow users to interact with one another, there is no thorough study on how users communicate with one another on social media in the higher education brand communications context. This research sheds light on this topic by identifying various types of tertiary communication. In conclusion, the authors suggested that HEIs ensure that their brand communications on social media are credible, relevant, clear, and vigilant.

**Keywords:** Higher education branding / Brand communications / Brand campaign / Social media / Facebook / Content analysis

## บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้มีเป้าหมายเพื่อศึกษาวิธีทัศน์ในแคมเปญ “มะเจิง รู้เรื่อง หายได้” ของมหิดลแทนเนลที่ดำเนินการในเดือนมิถุนายนและกรกฎาคม 2560 และเพื่อระบุรูปแบบของการสื่อสารโดยมหาวิทยาลัยและการสื่อสารระหว่างผู้รับสาร งานวิจัยนี้ใช้การวิเคราะห์เชิงเนื้อหาแบบอุปนัยเพื่อระบุรูปแบบเนื้อหาจากวิธีทัศน์ 36 ชิ้นงาน ความคิดเห็น 299 ข้อความและการแบ่งปัน 155 ข้อความ นักวิจัยเก็บข้อมูลในเดือนกันยายน พ.ศ. 2560 จากเฟสบุ๊คเพจของ “มหิดลแทนเนล” นักวิจัยสามารถระบุรูปแบบของวิธีทัศน์ 3 รูปแบบได้แก่ “ผู้เชี่ยวชาญ” “คนไข้” และ “ผู้ร่วมงาน” และระบุรูปแบบความคิดเห็นและการแบ่งปัน 17 แบบ งานวิจัยนี้พบว่า “คำตอบ” และ “คำถาม” เป็นรูปแบบที่พบมากที่สุดในความคิดเห็น และ “การเห็นชอบ” เป็นรูปแบบที่พบมากที่สุดของการแบ่งปัน ถึงแม้ว่าเป็นที่รู้กันว่าสื่อสังคมเปิดโอกาสให้ผู้ใช้ได้มีปฏิสัมพันธ์กับผู้อื่น แต่ยังไม่มีการศึกษารูปแบบการสื่อสารระหว่างผู้ใช้สื่อสังคมในบริบทของการสื่อสารแพร่หลาย สถาบันอุดมศึกษา งานวิจัยนี้ ทำให้เห็นถึงรูปแบบของการสื่อสารที่หลากหลาย ในบทสรุป นักวิจัยแนะนำให้สถาบันอุดมศึกษาสื่อสารแพร่หลายของสถาบันผ่านสื่อสังคมโดยเน้นความน่าเชื่อถือ ความเกี่ยวข้อง ความชัดเจน และความรอบคอบ

**คำสำคัญ:** การสร้างแพร่หลายสถาบันอุดมศึกษา / การสื่อสารแพร่หลาย / แพร่หลายแคมเปญ / สื่อสังคม / เฟซบุ๊ก / การวิเคราะห์เนื้อหา

## Introduction

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, higher education institutions (HEIs) have become complex institutions that possess various roles, including providing knowledge to students, enriching society, and being financially sound. To perform all these roles while thriving in the intensified global competition, a growing number of HEIs are adopting the branding technique (Chapleo, 2015). Branding is an important part of a business that aims to differentiate the business from the competition. One of the prevalent forces that affects higher education branding is the role of digital technology. Traditionally, HEIs have employed many communication tools to brand and advertise their institutions, such as prospectuses, advertising, publicity, public relations, sales promotions, open days, international higher education exhibitions, conventions, and direct mailing (Ivy, 2001). Although those traditional tools are still important, people from newer generations are less influenced by traditional promotional tools (Maringe, 2006). They are technologically savvy and are immersed in a variety of social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter (Rutter, Roper, & Lettice, 2016). In the business setting, social media can help organisations strengthen customer relationships, identify opportunities, build trust, and spread positive information through word-of-mouth (Ho, 2014; Huang & Benyoucef, 2013). Therefore, HEIs are now adjusting their branding and advertising activities that involve digital or social media.

Some studies in the past investigated the use of digital technology in the branding efforts of HEIs, including studying the role of the websites in building relationship (Klassen, 2002), the effectiveness of Twitter in student recruitment (Rutter, Roper, et al., 2016), and the different communication strategies on Facebook between universities in Thailand and U.S. (Taecharungroj, 2017). Given the tremendous impact of social media, existing research on higher education branding of social media is still very limited. It is imperative for universities to understand how they can communicate to the audience and how the audience respond and engage with content. Such understanding will allow universities to develop effective communication campaigns on social media platforms.

One of the universities that has utilised social media platforms to communicate and brand their institution is Mahidol University, a leading university in Thailand according to Higher Education Times. Mahidol University disseminates academic and practical content to the public in Thailand and beyond through its online channel called the 'Mahidol Channel'. The Mahidol Channel is one of the best practices of brand communications by a university in Thailand; the channel has received more than 100 million views on YouTube as of October 2018. In 2017, the Mahidol Channel launched a two-month 'Cancer, Fast Diagnosis, Curable' campaign (The Cancer Campaign) that aims to educate and motivate the public to live a healthier and more

conscious lifestyle while promoting Mahidol University's personnel and research. The online campaign from June to July 2017 has achieved some remarkable results. On Facebook, the Cancer Campaign received more than 1.6 million views through its educational and inspirational videos. The campaign also raised more than \$10,000 for cancer research funds for Mahidol University through the running event under the same name. The event was organised on 30 July 2017 to celebrate cancer survivors and to give hope to fellow patients. Lessons from this online brand communication campaign would significantly contribute to the body of knowledge on the higher education branding domain. The first objective of this paper is to investigate the characteristics of the content of the Cancer Campaign by Mahidol University. The analysis of those contents can lead to practical implications for universities that want to strengthen their brand. Furthermore, Facebook is a dominant social media platform that enhances the word-of-mouth communication among its users and creates virtual brand communities. The word-of-mouth communications on social media platforms are crucial for brands because they can lead to purchase intention (Jang, Chang, & Chen, 2015), the possibility of product development (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013), strengthened brand identity and community (Segrave, Carson, & Merhout, 2011), and improved trust and commitment (Kang, Tang, & Fiore, 2014). Therefore, the second objective of this paper is to analyse the tertiary communications or the word-of-mouth

communications among Facebook users through shared messages (shares) and comments on the campaign content.

## Literature Review

Higher Education Brand Communication on Social Media Platforms

Branding in higher education provides further evidence on the increasing transfer of business practices from the private sector to HEIs (Wæraas & Solbakk, 2009). Branding is conceived as a means or a technique 'to establish a product's name and to convey the legitimacy, prestige and stability of the manufacturer' (Chapleo, 2011). It is an attempt by an HEI to tell its stories. Successful branding helps customers by simplifying decisions, reducing risk, providing emotional reinforcement, and offering a sense of community (David, Leiter, & Loch, 1999; Judson, Aurand, Gorchels, & Gordon, 2008). By not telling the stories to the public, HEIs risk being overwhelmed by how others choose to tell their stories (Judson et al., 2008). Therefore, HEIs must find the essence of who they are and what they stand for in terms of values and characteristics. Subsequently, HEIs need to have a holistic communication strategy that is precise, uniform, and consistent in order to effectively communicate their brands to their audiences (Wæraas & Solbakk, 2009). HEIs utilised a number of communication tools to channel their voices, such as open days, the prospectus, the website, social media, and so on (Rutter, Lettice, & Nadeau, 2016).

Brand communications also includes types of communications that are not official since they can also be done by other stakeholders. Conversations and dialogues among HEI's stakeholders are examples of brand communication activities that cannot be directly controlled by HEIs (Whisman, 2009).

HEI brand communications has substantially changed due to the emergence of digital technology, especially the use of social media. Social media is a combination of web 2.0 technology and user-generated content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). There are many types of social media, including social networking websites, blogs, microblogs, video-sharing websites, photosharing websites, and so on (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). They are platforms that allow users to create identities and relationships, engage in conversations, form groups, share contents, and find other people (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011). Social media contributes to brand communications in many ways; it can help organisations strengthen relationships with stakeholders, build trust, facilitate positive word-of-mouth communications, and strengthen brand identity and community (Huang & Benyoucef, 2013; Kang et al., 2014; Segrave et al., 2011). HEIs are now increasingly incorporating social media into their branding activities (Taecharungroj, 2017). However, a simple social media presence by HEIs is not enough; they should actively engage with social media to reap the full benefits (Constantinides &

Zinck Stagno, 2011; Taecharungroj, 2017). Of all the existing social media platforms, the most populous, effective, and possibly the most chaotic is Facebook.

Facebook is currently the most popular social media platform. As of June 2017, Facebook has 2 billion monthly active users, which makes it the most populous social media platform (Constine, 2017). Despite its high volume of access and use, Facebook has continued to rapidly grow (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013; Ho, 2014). The average user logs onto the site at least once a day and is active for 32 minutes a day (Hansson, Wrangmo, & Solberg Søilen, 2013). According to previous market research, brands considered Facebook to be the most attractive social media platform for marketing purposes (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013). A previous study also shows that most Facebook users clicked on a company's page, representing an opportunity for brands to engage with audiences (Hansson et al., 2013).

On Facebook, users can freely share information with other people in their networks, making communications on this social media platform work like word-of-mouth communications (Hansson et al., 2013). Users can also become a member of a brand by clicking 'like' on a particular Facebook page created by a brand. Hence, Facebook pages by brands serve as virtual brand communities that can continuously build relationships with consumers and attract new ones (Manthiou, Tang, & Bosselman, 2014). Brands can use

their Facebook pages to share products, services, or organisational information, communicate marketing messages, expand networks, and receive feedback (Ho, 2014). Likewise, users can interact with the Facebook page by posting content on the wall, commenting on existing posts shared by the page's administrator, expressing interest by clicking the like or a reaction button or by sharing the post on their profile wall (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013). Each of the actions will appear on the news feed of other people in the user's network, transforming the action into a word-of-mouth communication (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013). As a consequence, brand communities are strengthened on Facebook by communications between the brand and audiences and communications among audiences (Ho, 2014). Social media platforms (like Facebook) are effective tools to enhance participation in brand communities (Kang et al., 2014); such participation also increases the user's brand trust and brand identification (Ho, 2014). To fully benefit from using Facebook as a branding tool, brands should analyse valuable information from their audiences, such as reactions, feedback, and shared messages (Hansson et al., 2013). Furthermore, not all feedback is positive, and brands should take negative feedback seriously and properly respond (Hansson et al., 2013).

## The Higher Education Brand Communication on Facebook Framework

From previous literature, this current research adopted and modified the corporate identity-corporate communication process by Balmer and Gray (1999) so it would be relevant in the current branding context. The Higher Education Brand Communication on Facebook Framework (Figure 1) encapsulates the essential branding constructs and brand communication activities on social media. The process begins with the brand identity, which refers to the values, purposes, strategies, culture, and structure of the HEIs. The two types of communication that were initiated by the HEIs are primary and secondary communications. Primary communications are the products, services, and behaviours of the staff of the HEIs that external stakeholder's experience. Contrarily, secondary communications are the formal communications of the HEIs, such as advertising, public relation activities, and other promotional tools. These two types of communication reinforce one another and send messages to the audiences. On Facebook, the audiences can take several actions that generate word-of-mouth or tertiary communications, which can be feedback to the HEIs or an influence over the opinions of other audiences. The perceptions of the audiences with respect to the three types of communications subsequently affect the brand image and reputation of the HEIs. According to Balmer and Gray (1999), brand

image is 'the immediate mental picture that individuals or individual stakeholder groups have of an organisation', whereas brand reputation is 'a result of consistent performance reinforced by the three types of communication'. Finally, the brand image and reputation can lead to a competitive advantage of the HEI, which is a desirable outcome of a branding process. Brand image and reputation also influence tertiary communications by shaping how people talk about the brand. Furthermore, brand image and reputation provide valuable feedbacks to the HEI on how to manage its brand identity.

24

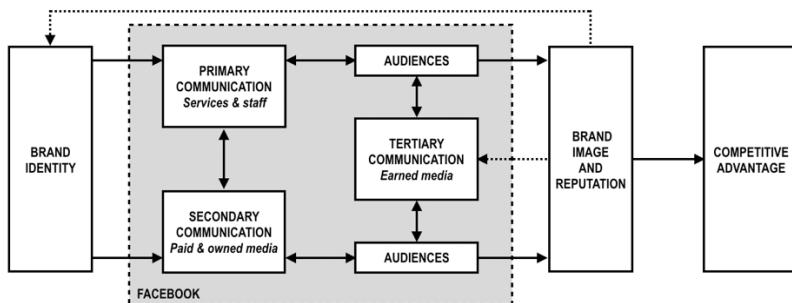


Figure 1 Higher Education Brand Communication on Facebook Framework, adapted from Balmer and Gray (1999)

Facebook is a social media platform that helps facilitate all types of brand communications. Brands can use Facebook pages to conduct primary and secondary communications via posts. Audiences who 'like' the page will be able to see the updates by the brands.

When audiences see the posts, they can engage with the posts by liking (or expressing a reaction), commenting, and/or sharing the post. Those actions are the tertiary communications on Facebook that will allow other people in their networks to see the message. This paper investigates how Mahidol University uses online campaigns on Facebook through various types of communication.

## The Cancer Campaign of Mahidol University

Mahidol University is a research university in Thailand with the intention to educate the public using its body of knowledge. With its motto 'Wisdom of the Land', Mahidol University founded an online channel called the 'Mahidol Channel' in 2013 to disseminate academic knowledge, research, and other beneficial information to the Thai public using the university's personnel. The Mahidol Channel positioned itself as an 'edutainment variety of arts and science' that transforms academic information into content that the public can easily access and understand (Mahidol Channel, 2017). The Mahidol Channel used online platforms to broadcast its contents, including its website (<http://channel.mahidol.ac.th>), the YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/user/mahidolchannel>), the Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/mahidolchannel>), and its mobile applications on iOS and Android. Through August 2017, the channel broadcasted 1,341 edutainment videos garnering up to combined 96 million views

on YouTube and Facebook (Tanomkitti, 2017). In 2017, the Mahidol Channel aims to reach 130 million views by planning to broadcast more impactful content; therefore, it launched 'The Cancer Campaign' as one of its four main online campaigns in its fifth year (Tanomkitti, 2017). Mahidol University has a strong history and competency in medicine and health sciences (Mahidol University, 2017); thus, the Cancer Campaign is a communication activity that utilises competent academic and medical staff of the university and their research for the benefit of the public. It is the first comprehensive campaign on its kind that warrant a thorough study.

The Cancer Campaign was a two-month online campaign in June and July 2017. The target groups were (1) the people who do not have cancer but seek prevention information and (2) people who were diagnosed with cancer. The campaign broadcasted several types of content such as (1) 31 question and answer (Q&A) short videos that are approximately 1 to 2 minutes long, (2) 4 research and knowledge videos that are approximately 5 minutes long, (3) a video shot during the running event, and (4) 10 Facebook Live videos that allow audiences to interact with cancer experts from Mahidol University. The campaign ended with a running event on 30 July 2017 that invited cancer patients who were cured of the disease to run with non-patients to inspire people to fight the disease and to raise awareness

and money for Mahidol University's cancer research. Without any sponsored content, the contents of this campaign generated more than 1.6 million views on Facebook. The campaign also raised more than \$10,000 for Mahidol University's cancer research. The investigation into its contents and several types of communication on Facebook would be beneficial for other HEIs that aim to strengthen their brand and to effectively communicate on social media platforms. From the Higher Education Brand Communication on Facebook Framework (Figure 1), this current research posed the following three research questions.

*Research question 1:* What are the types of content used by Mahidol University in the Cancer Campaign on Mahidol Channel's Facebook page?

*Research question 2:* What are the types of online feedback (comments) users provided on Mahidol Channel's Facebook page?

*Research question 3:* What are the types of message users shared with the campaign's content in their networks?

The first research question explores the primary and secondary communication initiated by Mahidol University. Both the second and the third questions are the tertiary communications created by the audiences who viewed the contents. The difference is that the comments (the second question) are both the tertiary communication

and the direct feedback to Mahidol University. Contrarily, the purpose of the shared messages (the third question) is to spread the content to other people in their networks.

### Methodology

To study the communication activities by Mahidol University for its cancer campaign, this research employs the content analysis technique (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). This research uses the single case study method (Baxter & Jack, 2008) because it is a unique campaign and the first of its kind. Furthermore, a single case study can clearly illustrate the comprehensive communications including primary, secondary, and tertiary communications by the university and how they are linked to one another. Mahidol University has a separate Facebook page for the Mahidol Channel ([www.facebook.com/mahidolchannel](http://www.facebook.com/mahidolchannel)). Although the Mahidol Channel disseminated content on various platforms including Facebook, YouTube, and its own website, this study analyses only the content on the Facebook page. The authors analysed all the video contents of the Cancer Campaign. There were 36 total videos. Regarding comments and shares, the authors analysed a maximum of five comments and shared messages per video content. In total, there are 299 comments analysed from 2,258 comments in all videos. The sample size implies an acceptable +/- 7% precision level where confidence level is 95% and  $P = .5$  (Yamane, 1973).

All content and data were collected in September 2017.

There are two approaches to content analysis, including inductive and deductive content analysis. In this current research, the authors used inductive content analysis, which is used when the prior knowledge about the phenomenon is insufficient or is fragmented (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Some existing literature studied digital content broadcasted by universities (Chapleo, Carrillo Durán, & Castillo Díaz, 2011; Taecharungroj, 2017). Chapleo et al. (2011) summarised six approaches of communications via universities' websites including teaching and research, management, international projection, universities' environment, innovation, and social responsibility. Likewise, the study by Taecharungroj (2017) identified 12 types of content published by universities on their Facebook pages including research, faculty, curriculum, campus, students, alumni, industry, events, products, image and reputation, announcements, and others. Despite the previous studies on universities' communications, no study has explored the word-of-mouth by users in social media platforms. In the coding process, 40 messages were selected to test the inter-coder reliability between the two coders. The inter-coder reliability has an agreement of 90.2%, a Cohen's Kappa of 0.89 and a Krippendorf's Alpha of 0.89. The inter-coder reliability results on comments and shared messages reveal a good level of agreement (Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Bracken, 2002).

## Findings

In total, there were 36 videos posted under the Cancer Campaign by Mahidol University. From the inductive content analysis, the authors identified three types of content based on the main person featured in the videos: experts, patients, and participants. Table 1 shows the descriptions of the three content types and descriptive statistics.

Table 1 Content type list and descriptive statistics of Mahidol Channel's posts

Content type	Description	n	avg. views	avg. shares	avg. comments
Experts	The video shows the university's personnel explaining factual information to the audience. The video often includes text, relevant images, computer graphics, and/or video footage.	31	44,087	889	69
Patients	The video tells the story of a cancer patient who has positive experiences with the university's personnel or services. The video emphasises emotions, research, and the call to action for the audiences to contribute to the cause.	4	24,117	461	24
Participants	The video shows inspirational messages from people at the event.	1	9,962	42	10

Experts content is overwhelmingly more common (31 out of 35 videos) than the other two types. The video typically shows the university's personnel explaining cancer-related information to the

audience. The examples of the titles of the videos are 'Single ladies and breast cancer', 'Can you not get chemotherapy if you have cancer?', 'What's the difference between cancer, tumour, and cyst?', and 'How to detect Lymphoma by yourself'. All of the videos are in the Thai language. This type of video uses a variety of techniques to communicate, such as interviews, on-screen text, relevant images, computer graphics, and video footage. The authors selected two experts videos to detail. The first video was the most popular video in the campaign entitled 'What are the causes of cancer?' As of September 2017, the video received 282,327 views, 7,971 shares, and 229 comments. The second video, 'Can coffee enema prevent colon cancer?', has 22,238 views, 279 shares, and 12 comments, which are close to the median values (20,499, 346, and 19, respectively). Therefore, this video is a good representation of the videos in this campaign.

The 'What are the causes of cancer?' video starts with a silver grey background with a large text that reads 'What are the causes of cancer?' in Thai language (Figure 2). The text is in black with an emphasis on the word 'cancer' in orange. Then, the video shows a medical professor of Mahidol University explaining the causes of cancer. During the explanation, the video used computer graphics to make content easier to understand and more engaging. Computer graphics were used when the explanation became more complex. For example, the computer graphics assist the instructor's explanation

of how cancer cells in human bodies fight white blood cells. At times, the video cut back to the instructor with on-screen text to emphasise important points that read 'avoid Carcinogenic' and 'keep yourself healthy'. The video ends with a logo of the campaign and the logo of the Mahidol Channel. The video lasts 1 minutes and 27 seconds, and it has upbeat background music when the professor is not speaking.



Figure 2 'What are the causes of cancer?' (source: [facebook.com/mahidolchannel](https://facebook.com/mahidolchannel))

Similarly, the second video (Figure 3), 'Can coffee enema prevent colon cancer?', begins with a silver grey background and a large text that reads 'Can coffee enema prevent colon cancer?' in Thai with an emphasis on 'colon cancer' in orange. The video then shows the interview with a medical professor of Mahidol University along with his credentials. Similar to the first video, texts were used on top of the interview to emphasise important points. In this video, it reads, 'colon cleansing is used medically only when necessary'. The professor went on to explain the importance of a proper diet. Unlike the first video, this video uses video footage of food to complement the explanation. At the end of the video, the text that reads 'no evidence was found that coffee enema helps prevent colon cancer' provides the answer to the question in the video title. This video is 58 seconds long.



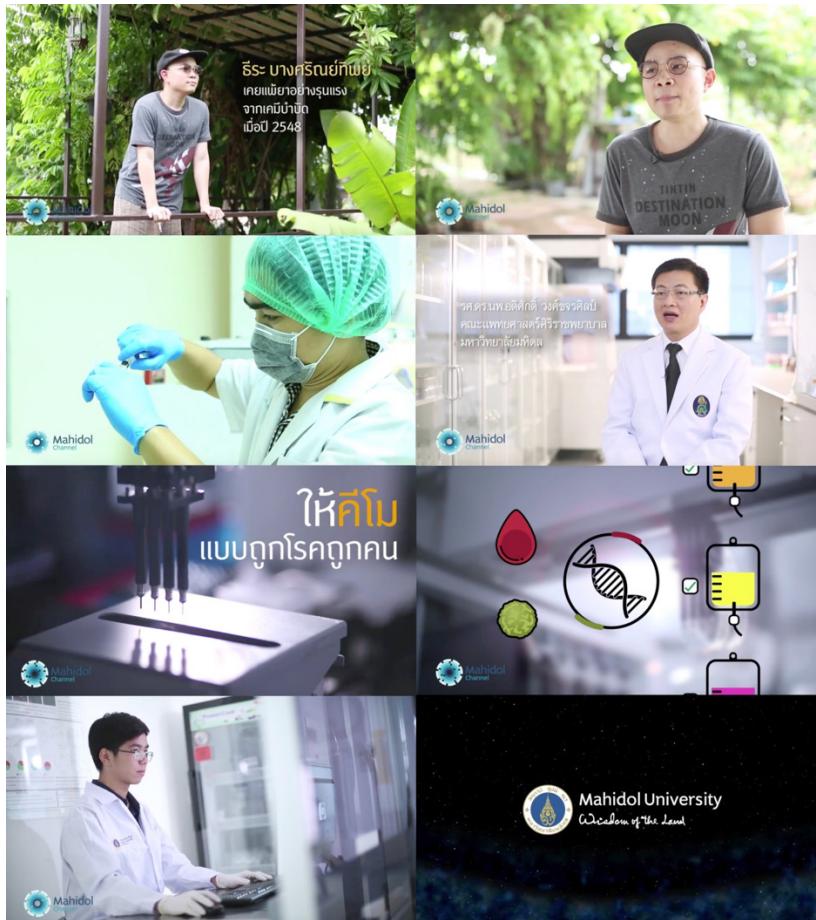
34

Figure 3 'Can coffee enema prevent colon cancer?' (source: [facebook.com/mahidolchannel](https://facebook.com/mahidolchannel))

The second type of content posted by Mahidol University during the Cancer Campaign is the 'patients' video. This type of video combines the story of patients and research done by Mahidol University. The videos explain how research can improve the well-being of cancer patients. There are four videos in this category with 24,117 views, 461 shares, and 24 comments on

average. An example of the patients content is a video entitled 'Personalised chemotherapy', which has a number of views, shares, and comments close to the average values. This video begins with a story of a cancer patient (Figure 4). He explained the symptoms of a severe chemotherapy allergy he had in 2005. Then, the video showed footage of research activities at Mahidol University with a voice-over from a medical professor. The professor then explained how research on personalised chemotherapy can reduce allergic reactions and improve the well-being of patients. Next, the video shows footage of research activities with text that reads 'personalised chemotherapy'. To explain complex procedures, the video used computer graphics to complement the voice-over of the professor. This video is 2 minutes and 50 seconds long. This type of patients content is considerably longer than the experts content since it covers the detailed story of a patient and the research activities of Mahidol University.

## \_\_\_\_ วารสารบัณฑิตศึกษาสตรี ธุรกิจบันทัย \_\_\_\_



36

Figure 4 'Personalised chemotherapy' (source: [facebook.com/mahidolchannel](https://facebook.com/mahidolchannel))

The last type of video posted by Mahidol University is a participants video. There is only one video in this category. This video shows the atmosphere of the running event organised by Mahidol

University together with participant interviews. The video contains several interviews of professors, celebrities, and patients at the event. The purpose of this video is to mentally support cancer patients. For example, a former cancer patient told the interviewer, 'To cancer patients undergoing treatment or chemotherapy, I want you to continue fighting. It will pass; time passes quickly [translated from Thai]'. Another former cancer patient said in the interview 'Participating in this event is worthwhile; I have suffered from lymphoma for 10 years. I want to give something back to the society [translated from Thai]'. In this event, participants voluntarily donated money to the cancer research fund.

To answer research questions 2 and 3, the authors collected and coded comments and shared message (shares) from the 36 videos posted by Mahidol University. In total, the authors analysed 299 comments and 155 shares. From all the comments and shares, the authors identified 17 types of content. Table 2 shows the types of content, their descriptions, frequencies, and their proportions to the total numbers. From the results, 'answer' is the most common type of comment, with 54 comments or 18 percent of all comments. Regarding shares, 'approval' is the most common type of share with 43 shares or 28 percent of all shares. The next section explains each type of content with examples. All of the examples were translated from Thai.

Table 2 Content type list and descriptive statistics of comments and shared messages

Content type	Description	Comments	%	Shares	%
Advice	The message offers advice to other people	17	6%	6	4%
Approval	The message expresses a general positive response to the video	15	5%	43	28%
Business	The message promotes the user's own business	5	2%	9	6%
Care/support	The message expresses a caring attitude or support towards other people.	17	6%	10	6%
Disapproval	The message expresses disapproval towards the content	6	2%	1	1%
Experience	The message describes the experience of the user	42	14%	11	7%
Fear/grief	The message expresses fear or grief	7	2%	10	6%
Gratefulness	The message expresses gratitude towards the video or the people in the video	26	9%	4	3%
Humour	The message expresses a <u>humourous</u> remark	9	3%	5	3%
Question	The message asks a follow-up question	46	15%	4	3%
Answer	The message answers the question	54	18%	0	0%
Rant	The message expresses a negative attitude towards something	8	3%	0	0%
Reinforcement	The message persuades other people or oneself to watch the content or contribute to the cause	0	0%	19	12%
Repetition	The message repeats the content of the video	0	0%	27	17%
Request	The message requests to share the content	8	3%	0	0%
Tagging	The message tags other people to share the content.	28	9%	4	3%
Others	Others	11	4%	2	1%
		299	100	155	100%
<b>Total</b>					%

Facebook users post ‘advice’ content when they want to offer benign advice to other users. For example, in a post entitled ‘Remove burnt meat, reduce cancer risk?’, a user offered an advice she received from a medical doctor ‘If you ask a doctor, the doctor would suggest that we eat boiled or steamed meat. The doctor suggested eating vegetables. Food should be processed as little as possible. Eat food that is easily digestible such as fish’. Users may also offer advice when they share the video. On 8 June 2017, a user shared a video called ‘Ovarian cancer vaccine’ with a message ‘Take a vaccine, ladies. Gade [the user’s name] also took one’.

‘Approval’ comments and shares are posted by users who express a general positive response to the video’s content. Approvals are the most common type of share. For example, a user shared a video entitled ‘Cell therapy for cancer II’ with a message ‘Would like to be another supporter of this project’. Another example is a user that shared a video entitled ‘Can a cancer patient eat meat?’ with a message ‘New knowledge’ to other people in her network. Some users also made ‘approval’ comments in the comment section of the video. Frequent phrases are ‘this is interesting’ and ‘I’m offering support to the doctor’.

The third type is ‘business’ content. Users who posted this type of content utilise the Cancer Campaign as a platform to promote their business. For example, on 7 August 2017, a user posted a comment

'Hello everyone, how is your health? Pae [the user's name] is taking care of cancer patients and is managing diets to help improve patients' health. I am willing to give advice to cure cancer without chemotherapy. Contact line: papang12'. Another example is a user who shared a video with a message 'Losing few Baht [Thai currency] to prevent is better than losing thousands to treat. Having food as medicine is better than having medicine as food. For information about Sesamin extract products and research findings by Dr. Prachya Kong Tawelert, call 086-8295626 062-4453296. Lind id: wongtoi'.

'Care/support' comments and shares are posted by users who want to express caring attitudes and support towards other people. The main difference between this kind of content and 'approval' is that 'approval' comments are directed to the video or personnel within the video. Conversely, 'care/support' comments and shares were directed towards other users on Facebook. For example, a user shared a video 'Ready for chemotherapy with these 8 items' with a message 'Cancer, fast diagnosis, curable. I'm offering support to everyone'. Sometimes, users comment with a Facebook sticker, such as a thumbs-up sticker, to offer support to other users.

The opposite of 'approval' content is 'disapproval' comments and shares. Although there are very few 'disapprovals' – 6 comments and 1 share – some users expressed disapproval towards the video content. In a video entitled 'Can alkali water cure cancer?', a user

posted a comment ‘Nothing is certain. Do not believe what is right or what is wrong from the experiment no matter who that person is (a doctor or otherwise) because everyone has a habit of bragging about his or her knowledge’.

‘Experience’ is the type of content whereby users describe their personal experience to others. Oftentimes, cancer patients or people who know cancer patients posted about his or her personal experiences. Many non-patients also shared their personal experiences. For example, a user shared a video about annual health check-ups with a message ‘From the time I was 35 years old, I have had health check-up every year without embarrassment. Annual health check-ups made me see something wrong, which was removed right away. It is important when we get older’.

‘Fear/grief’ content is used by users to express fear or grief towards cancer. In a video entitled ‘Ready for chemotherapy with these 8 items’, a wife of a cancer patient wrote ‘Disheartened... my husband completed radiotherapy but he refused to have chemotherapy. It has been delayed for more than two months. I’m very distressed and disheartened. I just want him to be fine and fight for me and for our children’. Another example is a user who shared a content with a message ‘Cancer. Feel upset just by hearing the name. Please don’t let it happen to anyone’.

Many times, users expressed gratitude towards the video or people in the video. This type of content is 'gratefulness'. On 31 July 2017, a user shared a video content with a message 'This is the story of my daughter. I'm supporting other families to pull through. It will take all the space in this wall to thank everyone and every organization involved. Our family is indebted to this land'.

Sometimes, users posted 'humour' content that expresses a humorous remark, although it is not very common, with 9 comments and 5 shares. For example, in the video entitled 'How to detect Lymphoma by yourself', an online celebrity 'Kay' demonstrated how to detect Lymphoma using a variety of rubbing and pressing techniques. A user subsequently shared the video with a message '... I am afraid I cannot rub correctly. Could 'Kay' teach me how to do it?'. For comments, users sometimes used GIF animated images by Facebook to express humorous remarks.

The next two types of comments and shares are 'questions' and 'answers'. They are also the two most common types of comment. Users often posted questions in the comment section of videos. Usually, other users would make a comment answering a question. For example, in a video entitled 'Is it possible to get an ovarian cancer vaccine if I have had sex?', a user asked a question 'If I have never had sex, can this vaccine prevent cancer? This disease is very scary'.

Then, another user responded 'Yes you can but it will be most effective with women age below 26. You can get it if you are above 26 years old. I got one when I was 28...'

'Rant' is a content whereby users express a negative attitude towards something or someone. The difference between 'rant' and 'disapproval' is that the negative attitude of 'disapproval' content is directed towards the video content. Typically, 'rant' is a comment that counters another user's opinion.

'Reinforcement' and 'repetition' are types of content found only in shares. Users shared a video with a 'reinforcement' message to persuade other people to watch the video. For example, a user wrote 'Who need to test for liver cancer? Let's listen to good knowledge by Professor Taweesak' when she shared a video about liver cancer. Another example is a user who wrote 'Please watch + listen until the end' when she shared the 'Can coffee enema prevent colon cancer?' video. Conversely, 'repetition' is a type of message in which users simply repeat the content posted by Mahidol University.

Sometimes, users posted in the comment section to request permission to share. This is referred to as a 'request' comment. Contrarily, some users use a Facebook feature to tag other users. These types of comments and shares are categorised as 'tagging'. Users who are tagged will be notified by Facebook. Hence, the video

content is directed towards particular people, unlike normal shared messages that were distributed indiscriminately to people in networks. Finally, 'others' are comments and shares which cannot be categorised in any type of content. They are general opinions or irrelevant messages posted by users.

## Discussion and conclusion

### Research implications

This current research found that Mahidol University, through its Cancer Campaign on its online Mahidol Channel, posted three types of video content: experts, patients, and participants. The findings show that on Facebook, the primary and secondary communications by the brand are intertwined. Social media platforms allow the personnel (primary communication) to have a voice through a formal communication channel (secondary communication), which in this case is a Facebook page. Meanwhile, unlike traditional formal communication channels, social media platforms enable the university to add an authentic human touch to formal communications through the inclusion of the university's personnel and facilities. Although it is commonly known that social media allow users to interact with one another (Mangold & Faulds, 2009), there is no thorough study of how users communicate with one another on social media in the higher education brand communications context. This research shed light

on this topic. The findings show that there are 17 types of comments and shares posted by users. Another novel finding of this research is the difference between types of comments and types of shares. Some types of content are common in both comments and shares, such as 'care/support', 'approval', and 'experience'. Some types are more prevalent in comments such as 'question' and 'answer'. Contrarily, 'reinforcement' and 'repetition' types were only found in shares.

Another insight from this research is a better understanding of how the perceptions of audiences from the three types of communication affect brand image. Although it is well theorised that brand communications affect brand image and reputation (Abratt & Kleyn, 2012; Alessandri, Yang, & Kinsey, 2006; Arpan, Raney, & Zivnuska, 2003; Balmer & Gray, 1999; Chapleo et al., 2011; Martinez & De Chernatony, 2004), a deep exploration of the perception towards brand communications is limited. From the availability of explicit responses by users in the form of comments and shares on Facebook, this research described various reactions that could shape brand image and reputation. Some types of content are inherently positive, such as 'approval', 'gratefulness', 'reinforcement', and 'repetition'. These types of responses can subsequently lead to an improvement of the brand image and reputation. Conversely, 'disapproval' of the content posted by the university might lead to image and reputation deterioration if they are not well managed. Although this research

does not investigate the relationship between responses and brand image formation, it opens up a new possibility to explore this issue in future research

### Practical implications

**Be credible:** Chapleo (2011) stated that HEIs need to emphasise unique selling points in order to improve its reputation. The success of the Cancer Campaign by Mahidol University comes from the ability to leverage the medical competence of the university. The most common type of content broadcasted in this campaign is the experts content which features the medical experts in the university. As a result, less than 2 percent of comments and shares explicitly 'disapproved' of the content posted by the university. Based on the framework in Figure 1, the university needs to discover its identity before communicating its brand in order to make its brand communication strategy precise, uniform, and consistent (Wæraas & Solbakk, 2009).

**Be relevant:** A mutually beneficial relationship created between a brand and its stakeholders is the key to branding (Curtis, Abratt, & Minor, 2009). The Cancer Campaign by Mahidol University represents a brand communication campaign that targets a social issue that concerns a large number of people. Examples of highly relevant communications are the patient videos which tell the stories

of cancer patients. These videos explain the struggles and hopes that resonate well with the general public. As a result, the campaign garnered millions of views and thousands of responses from the public. Therefore, after discovering its brand identity, HEIs need to explore the issues that are relevant to their stakeholders. Then, the brand communication campaign can be employed to bridge what the HEI can do and what the stakeholders want.

**Be clear:** Facebook is by far the most populous social media platform (Constine, 2017). It presents both abundant opportunities and overwhelming competition for audience's attention. A simple presence of social media platforms is not enough. HEIs need to understand how to engage audiences (Constantinides & Zinck Stagno, 2011). The content posted by Mahidol University has many characteristics from which other HEIs can learn. For example, 'experts' videos typically last no longer than 2 minutes. The two sample videos are 87 and 58 seconds in length. Short videos keep audiences focused. These videos also use simple language and visual techniques such as on-screen text, computer graphics, and video footage to ensure clarity to the audience.

**Be vigilant:** Despite the good intentions and beneficial content by the university, there are still negative and unintended comments from the Facebook users due to the uncontrollable nature of social media platforms (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Examples of negative

or unintended comments are ‘disapproval’, ‘rant’, and ‘business’ comments and shared messages. There are several ways to respond to such feedbacks effectively including censorship or deletion, appropriate responses, and avoidance (Dekay, 2012). Dekay (2012) suggested organisations to focus on “fun” or harmless content to reduce the number of negative comments. Universities have to set up appropriate policies to deal with these feedbacks.

#### Limitations and future research

Despite its contributions, this research has few notable limitations. First, this research is a single case study on a brand communication campaign by Mahidol University. Hence, the authors only identified three types of content posted by the university. A more comprehensive study of brand communications over a longer period would detect more types of videos. As a result, although this research found a wide range of types of comments and shares, it is possible to identify more types of responses if the audience watched other types of videos. Culture is another limitation of this research, since all of the content studied was in the Thai language. All university’s personnel and audience are also Thai, which might have an effect on types of content. Studies on people from different cultures might yield different results. Finally, an investigation on the relationships among

each type of communication can be beneficial, e.g. relationships between each type of primary communications and the types of word-of-mouth communications.

## Bibliography

Abratt, R., & Kleyn, N. (2012). Corporate identity, corporate branding and corporate reputations: Reconciliation and integration. *European Journal of Marketing*, 46(7/8), 1048-1063.

Alessandri, S. W., Yang, S.-U., & Kinsey, D. F. (2006). An integrative approach to university visual identity and reputation. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 9(4), 258-270.

Arpan, L. M., Raney, A. A., & Zivnuska, S. (2003). A cognitive approach to understanding university image. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 8(2), 97-113.

Balmer, J. M., & Gray, E. R. (1999). Corporate identity and corporate communications: creating a competitive advantage. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 4(4), 171-177.

Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative case study methodology: Study design and implementation for novice researchers. *The qualitative report*, 13(4), 544-559.

Chapleo, C. (2011). Exploring rationales for branding a university: Should we be seeking to measure branding in UK universities? *Journal of Brand Management*, 18(6), 411-422.

Chapleo, C. (2015). Brands in Higher Education: Challenges and Potential Strategies. *International Studies of Management & Organization*, 45(2), 150-163.

Chapleo, C., Carrillo Durán, M. V., & Castillo Díaz, A. (2011). Do UK universities communicate their brands effectively through their websites? *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 21(1), 25-46.

Constantinides, E., & Zinck Stagno, M. C. (2011). Potential of the social media as instruments of higher education marketing: a segmentation study. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 21(1), 7-24.

Constine, J. (2017, 27 June 2017). Facebook now has 2 billion monthly users... and responsibility. Retrieved from <https://techcrunch.com/2017/06/27/facebook-2-billion-users/>.

Curtis, T., Abratt, R., & Minor, W. (2009). Corporate brand management in higher education: The case of ERAU. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 18(6), 404-413.

Cvijikj, I. P., & Michahelles, F. (2013). Online engagement factors on Facebook brand pages. *Social Network Analysis and Mining*, 3(4), 843-861.

David, C., Leiter, M. G., & Loch, M. A. (1999). Brand leverage. *The McKinsey Quarterly*(2), 100.

Dekay, S. H. (2012). How large companies react to negative Facebook comments. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 17(3), 289-299.

Elo, S., & Kyngäs, H. (2008). The qualitative content analysis process. *Journal of advanced nursing*, 62(1), 107-115.

Hansson, L., Wrangmo, A., & Solberg Søilen, K. (2013). Optimal ways for companies to use Facebook as a marketing channel. *Journal of Information, Communication and Ethics in Society*, 11(2), 112-126.

Ho, C.-W. (2014). Consumer behavior on Facebook: does consumer participation bring positive consumer evaluation of the brand? *EuroMed Journal of Business*, 9(3), 252-267.

Huang, Z., & Benyoucef, M. (2013). From e-commerce to social commerce: A close look at design features. *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, 12(4), 246-259.

Ivy, J. (2001). Higher education institution image: a correspondence analysis approach. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 15(6), 276-282.

Jang, Y.-T., Chang, S. E., & Chen, P.-A. (2015). Exploring social networking sites for facilitating multi-channel retailing. *Multimedia Tools and Applications*, 74(1), 159-178.

Judson, K. M., Aurand, T. W., Gorchels, L., & Gordon, G. L. (2008). Building a university brand from within: University administrators' perspectives of internal branding. *Services Marketing Quarterly*, 30(1), 54-68.

Kang, J., Tang, L., & Fiore, A. M. (2014). Enhancing consumer–brand relationships on restaurant Facebook fan pages: Maximizing consumer benefits and increasing active participation. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 36, 145-155.

Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. *Business horizons*, 53(1), 59-68.

Kietzmann, J. H., Hermkens, K., McCarthy, I. P., & Silvestre, B. S. (2011). Social media? Get serious! Understanding the functional building blocks of social media. *Business horizons*, 54(3), 241-251.

Klassen, M. L. (2002). Relationship marketing on the Internet: the case of top-and lower-ranked US universities and colleges. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 9(2), 81-85.

Lombard, M., Snyder-Duch, J., & Bracken, C. C. (2002). Content analysis in mass communication: Assessment and reporting of intercoder reliability. *Human communication research*, 28(4), 587-604.

Mahidol Channel. (2017). Mahidol Channel. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/user/mahidolchannel/about>.

Mahidol University. (2017). Our History - Mahidol University. Retrieved from <https://mahidol.ac.th/en/history.html>.

Mangold, W. G., & Faulds, D. J. (2009). Social media: The new hybrid element of the promotion mix. *Business horizons*, 52(4), 357-365.

Manthiou, A., Tang, L. R., & Bosselman, R. (2014). Reason and reaction: the dual route of the decision-making process on Facebook fan pages. *Electronic Markets*, 24(4), 297-308.

Maringe, F. (2006). University and course choice: Implications for positioning, recruitment and marketing. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 20(6), 466-479.

Martinez, E., & De Chernatony, L. (2004). The effect of brand extension strategies upon brand image. *Journal of consumer marketing*, 21(1), 39-50.

Rutter, R., Lettice, F., & Nadeau, J. (2016). Brand personality in higher education: anthropomorphized university marketing communications. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 1-21.

Rutter, R., Roper, S., & Lettice, F. (2016). Social media interaction, the university brand and recruitment performance. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(8), 3096-3104.

Segrave, J., Carson, C., & Merhout, J. W. (2011). *Online Social Networks: An Online Brand Community Framework*. Paper presented at the AMCIS.

Taecharungroj, V. (2017). Higher education social media marketing: 12 content types universities post on Facebook. *International Journal of Management in Education*, 11(2), 111-127.

Tanomkitti, K. (2017). Mahidol Channel: Thriving university media that transforms difficult knowledge and research to easy contents. Retrieved from <http://www.adaymagazine.com/interviews/dialogue-67>.

Wæraas, A., & Solbakk, M. N. (2009). Defining the essence of a university: Lessons from higher education branding. *Higher education*, 57(4), 449-462.

Whisman, R. (2009). Internal branding: a university's most valuable intangible asset. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 18(5), 367-370.

Yamane, T. (1973). Statistics: An introductory analysis.