EXAMINING MEDIA CONSUMPTION BEHAVIORS, KNOWLEDGE, AND OPINIONS TOWARD NATIVE ADVERTISING: A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN COMMUNICATION PROFESSIONALS AND CONSUMERS

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ABSTRACT. This study examined whether social media consumption behaviors, knowledge and opinions toward native advertising appeared on social media differed significantly between Thai communication professionals and consumers. Specifically, this study examined interrelationships between the three variables differed significantly between these two groups. Self-administered and online surveys were conducted. The final sample consisted of 428 Thai consumers and 321 Thai communication professionals. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, Independent Samples t-tests and Peason Correlations.

The findings revealed that Thai consumers had lower degree of social media consumption behaviors as compared to communication professionals. Consequently, Thai consumers were less knowledgeable about native advertising labels and overall knowledge about native advertising than communication professionals.

Additionally, Thai consumers had less positive opinions toward native advertising, opinions toward the brands, and overall opinions toward native advertising as compared to communication professionals. When investigating the interrelationships between the three variables of each group, results further revealed that for the communication professional group, the more they exhibited a variety of social media consumption, the more likely they were knowledgeable about native advertising and displayed negative

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opinions toward brands. On the other hand, for the consumer group, the more they exhibited a variety of social media consumption, the more likely they were knowledgeable about native advertising and displayed positive opinions toward native advertising and brands, but negative opinions toward publishers.

Keywords: Thailand; Communication professionals; Media consumptions; Native advertising; Opinions toward brands

Introduction

Recently, native advertising, a new form of online advertising has gained its popularity among online community practitioners.

Unlike the traditional advertising, native advertising is the message designed to blend in the page content environment from an editorial point of view (Manic, 2015; Jiang, McKay, Richards & Snyder, 2017). Native advertising requires payment for publishers or native advertising platform from a brand company. Derek Handova, a CRM magazine's freelance journalist, states that native advertising concept is not new. Its practice adapts from print publishing that brand owners would often purchase advertorial spreads in publications with wide print circulations. According to Handova, the native advertising is a soft sell promotion and noticeable labelled as "advertising." The readers know they are reading sponsored contents in some other way and consider them as informative. Handova noted that these articles, native advertising, commonly appears with labelling phrases such as "other stories," "recommended for you," or "from around the web" section at the bottom (Rowe, 2016: 28). An, Kerr & Jin (2019) further added that when native advertisements are presented as social media in-feed units, the distinction between ads and platform content also becomes less clear such as Facebook signaling "suggested posts" and Twitter identifying "promoted tweet."

A seminar of Group M Focal, a global advertising media group, reported the effectiveness of native advertising in that consumers fill the eyes of native ads up to 4.1 times while they look at the banner only 2.7 times. From the survey, the findings revealed that 80 percent of business decision makers received information through reading contents. Seventy percent of American consumers learned about products through online contents rather than traditional advertising. Eighty-seven percent of B2B marketers and 77 percent of B2C marketers employed content marketing as one of the major strategies because the data showed that 60 percent of consumers felt good about watching/reading native advertising, relevant to consumers' interests and purchase intents (Marketeer, 2016).

Like the growth of online media advertising in other countries, the expenditure of digital advertising in Thailand has increased from billion Thai Baht in 2012 to 19.69 billion Thai Baht in 2019 (Moore, 2019). WP (2019) reported that Thailand has population around 69.24 million people. Telephone numbers in Thailand are used about 92.33 million and 55 million people can gain access to the internet via smartphone. Fifty-one million people often access social media. On average, Thai people spend 9 hours and 11 minutes each day on the Internet and 49 million people access social media via smartphone. The top ten most popular social media sites in Thailand are Facebook, Youtube, Line, Facebook Messenger, Instagram, Twitter, Skype, LinkedIn, Pinterest, and WeChat. The most popular social media platform in Thailand are Facebook (50 million users), followed by Instagram (13 million users), Twitter (4.7 million users), LinkedIn (2.4 million users), and Snap Chat (555,000 users). Even though there is no statistical report specific to native advertising expenditures in Thailand, Punyapiroje (2019) reviewed Thai literature related to this issue and conducted in-depth interviews with Thai journalists and advertising professionals and reported that the concept of native advertising has been discussed in Thailand since 2013.

However, no regulation related to native advertising contents and techniques has been imposed.

Native advertising has been criticized for a long time because the message is designed in the form that seamlessly blends into

publishers' platforms. Providing minimal or no sponsorship disclosure of native advertising often tricks consumers into viewing their contents without revealing their sources (An, Kerr, & Seung, 2019). In 2013, The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) of the United States expressed concern over native advertising that it was not possible to differentiate between news content and advertisements in online media and print media. FTC has issued a warning to the newspaper media organizations that the uses of native advertising methods is unfair for consumers. However, most journalists and editors have a positive reaction to native advertising because everyone benefits all (Chaisathansiri, 2015). Laursen (2017), founder of The Native Advertising Institute (NAI), conducted a study in collaboration with with The International News Media Association, to learn about native advertising from the perspective of new news media executives; the study titled "Native advertising: Trends in news media" with 231 participants from 51 countries. The findings revealed that more than 50 percent of news organizations had successfully launched native advertising services. Eighty-two percent felt positive about native advertising and 92 percent thought that native advertising was important. In addition, 47 percent of news organizations had assigned news editors responsible for producing native advertisements. Thirty- five percent of the organizations had their own studios to produce the native advertisements and 28 percent of them had separate teams dedicated to producing native advertising.

As stated previously, disguising advertising contents as the news contents seems to be unfair for consumers who have less knowledge to distinguish between advertising and news. Many scholars attempted to investigate how native advertising affected consumers' recognition and their attitudes toward native advertising, brand owners and publishers. Most studies found similar results in that consumers seemed to have less recognitions about native advertising.

However, when they recognized the content/message as advertising, they felt deceived by the publishers and brands. Consequently, this led to decreased perceptions of articles' quality;

articles,' publishers' and sponsors' credibility; less positive attitudes toward native advertisements and brands as sponsors; including less articles' engagement, both sharing articles or purchasing the advertised products or services (Lazauskas, 2014; Wojdynski, 2016; Wu, Huang, Li, Bortree, Yang, Xiao & Wang, 2016; Jiang, McKay, Richards & Snyder, 2017). In contrast, consumers with strong information-seeking motivation showed more positive attitudinal and behavioral responses (Lee, Kim & Ham, 2016; Sweetser, Ahn, Golan & Hochman, 2016; An, Kerr & Seung, 2019).

When reviewing previous Thai studies related to content marketing, little focuses on native advertising, except for the contribution of one study - Phalakornkul & Chaisuwan (2016). In their study, raised concern about the ethical issues with online advertising media, focusing only on the effects of Facebook advertisements as a whole, not discussing about native advertising. Additionally, no studies have explored the perspective of communication professionals as content producers in terms of how they know and feel about native advertising. Thus, this study aims to examine the differences, if any, between communication professionals' and consumers' perspectives about native advertising related to social media consumption behaviors, knowledge and opinions toward native advertising. The results of this research will be beneficial to assist academics and communication professionals develop social media advertising guidelines and ethical regulations for mass communication professionals. Additionally, the communication scholars can employ the results to design courses related to ethics in the mass communication professionals and advertising media literacy for publics.

Research objectives

1. To examine communication professionals' and consumers' social media consumption behaviors, knowledge and opinions toward native advertising in Thailand.

2. To compare communication professionals' and consumers' social media consumption behaviors, knowledge and opinions toward native advertising in Thailand.
3. To investigate the interrelationships between the three variables indicated in the objective # 2 between the two groups.

Theoretical framework

This study employed the hierarchy-of-effects model of Robert J. Lavidge and Gary A. Steiner (1961) to develop the conceptual framework. The hierarchy explains how advertising influences a consumer's decision to purchase or not purchase a product or service. It represents the progression of learning and decision-making consumer experiences of advertising. The model is used to set up a structured series of advertising message objectives for a particular product to build upon each successive objective until a sales is ultimately made. The objectives of advertisers is to guide potential customers through all six stages of the hierarchy from awareness, knowledge, liking, preference, conviction to purchase. In cognitive process, the awareness and knowledge stages occur when consumers expose to a product or service's information and process the given information. In affective process, liking and preference stages occur when consumers form affective response toward an advertised brand. Finally, the conviction and purchase stages as conative process focus on actions. When an advertiser attempts to compel potential customers to act on the information they have learned and developed emotional connection they have formed with a brand by completing a purchase.

Besides the hierarchy-of-effects model, this study includeda variable about personal differences to investigate whether there are differences between communication professionals' and consumers' perspectives about native advertising if they have social media consumption experiences, knowledge and opinions toward native advertising. Therefore, the proposed hypotheses are as follows:

Hypothesis 1: There are differences between communication professionals' and consumers' social media consumption behaviors in terms of frequently social media usage, social media channel usage and social media's source usage.

Hypothesis 2: There are differences between communication professionals' and consumers' knowledge about native advertising in terms of types, concepts and labels.

Hypothesis 3: There are differences between communication professionals' and consumers' opinions toward native advertising, opinions toward brands, opinions toward publishers, and overall opinions.

Hypothesis 4: There are relationships between communication professionals' social media consumption behaviors, overall knowledge about native advertising, opinions toward native advertising, opinions toward brands, opinions toward publishers, and overall opinions.

Hypothesis 5: There are relationships between consumers' social media consumption behaviors, overall knowledge about native advertising, opinions toward native advertising, opinions toward brands, opinions toward publishers, and overall opinions.

Methods

Samples

The respondents of the survey research were 428 Thai consumers and 321 Thai communication professionals. The researcher chose a confidence level of 95 percent that gave the probability of 95 percent chance that the correct value was displayed in this survey. The confidence interval was determined to be 5 percent, which resulted in a sample size of 384 individuals for each group. For the consumer group, the response rate was 100 percent and for the communication professional group, the response rate was 84 percent.

Data collection

This study collected data from January to February of 2019.

The questionnaire was distributed in two different ways: a self-administered paper-and-pencil questionnaire was distributed to consumers and an online survey was distributed to communication professionals. The criteria to screen a sample of this study was that for the consumer group, they must have experiences in viewing native advertisements in a social media channel, at least one channel and for the communication professional group, the researcher asked whether they have had working experiences related to native advertising. If all confirmed their qualifications, the researcher then informed them about the research objectives and the research study's benefits for the academic purposes. Once they agreed to participate in the study, the researcher handed in the questionnaire to complete.

Questionnaire development

In order to answer these 3 research questions, the researcher developed a structure questionnaire, consisting of 4 sections: the participant's demographics; social media consumption behaviors as measured in terms of frequently social media usage, social media channel usages, and social media's source access; knowledge about native advertising as measured in terms of the types, concepts and labels; and the opinions toward native advertising as measured in terms of opinions toward native advertising, publishers and brands.

Despite a lack of an available scale to measure the native advertising knowledge, the researcher developed this scale based on the native advertising definition and concepts of Interactive Advertising Bureau (2013). There were seven questions assessing knowledge about native advertising types, 12 questions capturing native advertising concepts and eight questions measuring native advertising labels. Each correct answer in the knowledge domain carried 1 mark, while "wrong" or "don't know" carried 0 mark. This gave a total possible score of 27 for knowledge section.

To measure opinions toward native advertising, the researcher developed the scales based on the "Regulations on the ethics of the

newspaper professionals of National Press Council 2016" by Press Council of Thailand (2016) and the "Ethics of advertising professionals" by Advertising Association of Thailand (2020). All measured were assessed using 5-point Likert-type scale, where 1 = "strong disagree," and 5 = "strong agree." The first draft questionnaire was evaluated by three communication professors for the purpose of face validity and content validity. The researcher also pretested the questionnaire with a small sample to ensure reliability of the scales. All reliability of the questionnaire ranged from 0.70 - 0.80.

Data analysis

Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were employed for analyzing the data. A series of independent samples t-tests and Pearson Product-Moment correlations were used to test all five hypotheses.

Findings

Sample characteristics

For this study, 749 useable questionnaires were returned; 428 were from Thai consumers (285 women and 143 men) and 321 were from Thai communication professionals (almost 300 women). For the consumer group, most of them had a Bachelor's degree and about 50 percent reported a personal monthly earning of 25,000 Baht or less. For the communication professional group, majority also had a Bachelor's degree as well. In addition, more than 50 percent had personal monthly incomes of 35,000 Baht and more.

Social media consumption behaviors

Table 1 presents the social media consumption behaviors of communication professionals and consumers. The findings revealed that more than 80 percent of samples in both groups indicated that

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they used social media everyday. Most of them used Facebook, Line, Website, Instagram, Twitter, and other social media applications, respectively. While communication professionals most preferred to search information via online newspaper media, consumers most preferred to search information via general organizations. However, consumers tended to pay closer attention to online information obtained via social media than that of communication professionals.

Table 1: Social media consumption behaviors of communication professionals and consumers

Social media consumption behaviors	Communication professionals (n = 321)		Consumers (n = 428)	
	n	**Percent**	**n**	**Percent**
Frequently social media usage				
Everyday	293	91.60	345	81.00
2-3 days per time	9	2.80	30	7.00
4-5 day per time	14	4.40	24	5.60
6-7 days per time	3	0.90	18	4.30
2-3 weeks per time	1	0.30	9	2.10
Total	320	100.00	426	100.00
	Missing value = 1		Missing value = 2	
M and SD of frequently social media usage	M = 4.84, SD = 0.56		M = 4.61, SD = 0.93	
Social media channel usages (check all that apply)				
Line	226	70.40	297	69.40
Website	222	69.20	236	55.10
Facebook	286	89.10	369	86.20
Twitter	155	48.30	95	22.20
Instagram	178	55.50	179	41.80
Others	17	5.30	27	6.3
M and SD of social media channel usages	M = 3.38, SD = 1.23		M = 2.82, SD = 1.24	
Social media's source access (check all that apply)				
Magazine	144	33.90	110	34.40
Newspapers	203	47.80	221	69.10
Online influencers	195	45.90	174	54.40
General organizations	263	61.90	186	58.10

Social media consumption behaviors	Communication professionals (n = 321)		Consumers (n = 428)	
	n	**Percent**	**n**	**Percent**
Others	19	4.50	24	7.50
M and SD of social media's source access	M = 2.23, SD = 1.06		M = 1.93, SD = 1.01	
The frequencies for the online content data inspection				
Always	105	32.7	117	27.5
Often	99	30.8	100	23.5
Sometimes	97	30.2	154	36.2
Rarely	11	3.4	30	7.0
Seldom	8	2.5	19	4.5
Never	1	0.3	6	1.4
Total	321	100.0	426	100
Missing value = 2				
The places for inspecting online content data				
Check information with various sources	86	26.8	129	30.2
Check information with famous publishers	142	44.2	154	36.1
Check information with brand owners' media	41	12.8	58	13.6
Check information with government's media	16	5.0	45	10.5
Check information with famous online influencers	31	9.7	39	9.1
Others	5	1.6	2	0.5
Total	321	100.0	427	100
Missing value = 1				
The purposes in using social media (check all that apply)				
Working	238	74.10	218	50.90
Gaining knowledge	266	82.90	338	79.00
Social	177	55.10	213	49.80
Entertaining	209	65.10	278	65.00
Killing time	76	23.70	107	25.00
Others	9	2.80	8	1.90

Table 2: Independent group t-test between communication professionals and consumers

Variables	Communication professionals (n =321)		Consumers (n = 428)		
	M	SD	M	SD	t-test
Social media consumption behaviors					
- Frequently social media usage	4.84	0.56	4.61	0.93	-4.35***
- Social media channel usages	3.38	1.23	2.82	1.24	-6.18***
- Social media's source access	2.23	1.06	1.93	1.01	-3.98***
Knowledge about native advertising					
- Native advertising types	4.33	1.53	4.02	1.59	-1.92
- Native advertising concept	9.77	1.72	9.83	2.04	0.44
- Native advertising labels	3.72	2.27	2.91	1.92	-5.14***
Overall knowledge about native advertising	17.75	3.49	16.62	3.49	-2.97**
Opinions toward native advertising					
- Native advertising	3.30	0.57	3.21	0.55	-2.26*
- Publishers	2.38	0.72	2.53	0.67	2.98**
- Brands	3.65	0.71	3.43	0.68	-4.19***
Overall opinions toward native advertising	3.12	0.32	3.06	0.30	-2.73**

*. Significant at the 0.05 level.
**. Significant at the 0.01 level.
***. Significant at the 0.001 level.

Knowledge about native advertising

The findings showed that consumers tended to have less knowledge about native advertising types (M = 4.02, SD = 1.59 vs. M = 4.33, SD = 1.53); knowledge about native advertising labels (M = 2.91, SD = 1.92 vs. M = 3.72, SD = 2.27); and overall knowledge about native advertising (M = 16.62, SD = 3.49 vs. M = 17.75, SD = 3.49) as compared

to communication professionals. In contrast, consumers tended to have more knowledge about native advertising concept (M = 9.83, SD =2.04 vs. M = 9.77, SD = 1.72) as compared to communication professionals.

Opinions toward native advertising, brands and publishers

The results showed that consumers tended to have less positive opinions toward native advertising (M = 3.21, SD = 0.55 vs. M = 3.30, SD = 0.57); opinions toward brands (M = 3.43, SD = 0.68 vs. M = 3.65, SD = 0.71); and overall opinions toward native advertising (M = 3.06, SD = 0.30 vs. M = 3.12, SD = 0.32) as compared to communication professionals. On the other hand, consumers tended to have more positive opinions toward publishers (M = 2.53, SD = 0.67 vs. M = 2.38, SD = 0.72) as compared to communication professionals.

Hypotheses Testing

In order to answer the second and third research questions, all five hypotheses were tested. Hypothesis 1 investigated whether there were significant differences between communication professionals and general consumers in terms of frequently social media usage, social media channel usages and social media's source access.

Independent samples t-tests results revealed that the differences between the groups were statistically significant in terms of frequently social media usage, $t(713.807) = - 4.35$, $p < .001$; social media channel usages, $t(743) = -6.18$, $p < .001$; and social media's sources access, $t(747) = -3.98$, $p < .001$.

The results showed that consumers tended to have lower frequently social media usage (M = 4.61, SD = 0.93 vs. M = 4.84, SD = 0.56), social media channel usage (M = 2.82, SD = 1.24 vs. M = 3.38, SD = 1.23) and social media's source access (M = 1.93, SD = 1.01 vs. M = 2.23, SD = 1.06) as compared to communication professionals (see Table 2).

Hypothesis 2 examined that whether there were significant differences between communication professionals and general consumers in terms of knowledge about native advertising types, about native advertising concept and about native advertising labels.

Independent samples t-tests results revealed that the differences between the groups were statistically significant in terms of knowledge about native advertising labels, $t(620.435) = -5.14$, $p < .001$; and overall knowledge about native advertising, $t(410) = -2.97$, $p < .01$.

The results showed that consumers tended to have less knowledge about native advertising labels ($M = 2.91$, $SD = 1.92$ vs. $M = 3.72$, $SD = 2.27$) and overall knowledge about native advertising ($M = 16.62$, $SD = 3.49$ vs. $M = 17.75$, $SD = 3.49$) as compared to communication professionals. However, there were no significant differences between communication professionals and general consumers in terms of knowledge about native advertising types and about native advertising concept (see Table 2).

Hypothesis 3 examined whether there were significant differences between communication professionals and general consumers in terms of opinions toward native advertising, opinions toward publishers, opinions toward brands and overall opinions.

Independent samples t-tests revealed that the differences between the groups were statistically significant in terms of opinions toward native advertising, $t(731) = -2.26$, $p < .05$; opinions toward publishers, $t(732) = 2.98$, $p < .01$; opinions toward brands, $t(706) = -4.19$, $p < .001$; and overall opinions $t(723) = -2.73$, $p < .01$.

The results showed that consumers tended to have less positive opinions toward native advertising ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 0.55$ vs. $M = 3.30$, $SD = 0.57$); opinions toward brands ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 0.68$ vs. $M = 3.65$, $SD = 0.71$); and overall opinions toward native advertising ($M = 3.06$, $SD = 0.30$ vs. $M = 3.12$, $SD = 0.32$) as compared to communication professionals. On the other hand, consumers tended to have more positive opinions toward publishers ($M = 2.53$, $SD = 0.67$ vs. $M = 2.38$, $SD = 0.72$) as compared to communication professionals (see Table 2).

Hypothesis 4 investigated whether there were interrelationships between communication professionals' social media consumption behaviors, overall knowledge about native advertising, opinions toward native advertising, opinions toward brands, opinions toward publishers and overall opinions.

Pearson correlations were employed to examine the interrelationship among the media consumption behaviors, overall knowledge about native advertising and opinions toward native advertising, publishers, brands and overall opinions of communication professionals. The findings revealed that frequently social mediausage had a weak negative correlation with opinions toward brands, $r = -0.13$, $p < .05$ and frequently social media usage had a weak positive correlation with overall knowledge about native advertising, $r = 0.12$, $p < .05$ (see Table 3).

Hypothesis 5 examined whether there were interrelationships between consumers' social media consumption behaviors, overall knowledge about native advertising, opinions toward native advertising, opinions toward brands, opinions toward publishers and overall opinions.

Table 3: Pearson correlations among the media consumption behaviors, knowledge and opinions toward native advertising of communication professionals

Communication Professionals (n = 321)					
Social media consumption behaviors	Overall knowledge about native ad	Opinions toward native ad	Opinions toward publishers	Opinions toward brands	Overall opinions
Frequently Social media usage	0.06	-0.02	0.06	-0.13*	-0.05
Social media channel usages	0.12*	0.05	-0.09	-0.10	-0.05
Social media's source access	0.10	0.06	-0.09	-0.02	-0.04

*. Significant at the 0.05 level.

Pearson correlations were employed to examine the interrelationship between the media consumption behaviors, overall knowledge about native advertising and opinions toward native advertising, publishers, brands and overall opinions of communication professionals. The findings revealed that frequently social media usage

had a weak positive correlation with opinions toward native advertising, r = 0.10, p < .05. The social media channel usage had a moderate positive correlation with overall knowledge about native advertising, r = 0.30, p < .01 and a weak negative correlation with opinions toward publishers, r = -0.12, p < .05. The social media's source access had a moderate positive correlation with overall knowledge about native advertising, r = 0.36, p < .01; a weak negative correlation with opinions toward publishers, r = -0.10, p < .05; and a weak positive correlation with opinions toward brands, r = 0.12, p < .05.

Table 4: Pearson correlations among the media consumption behaviors, knowledge and opinions toward native advertising of Consumers

Consumers (n = 428)					
Social media consumption behaviors	Overall knowledge about native advertising	Opinions toward native advertising	Opinions toward publishers	Opinions toward brands	Overall opinions
Frequently Social media usage	-0.07	0.10*	-0.08	0.07	0.07
Social media channel usages	0.30**	0.04	-0.12*	0.08	-0.00
Social media's source access	0.36**	0.03	-0.10*	0.12*	0.03

*. Significant at the 0.05 level.
**. Significant at the 0.01 level.

Discussions

In sum, the findings revealed that, for media consumption behaviors, the consumers had lower social frequently social media usage, social media channel usages and social media's source access, as compared to communication professionals. In terms of knowledge, consumers and communication professionals had similar knowledge level about native advertising types and concepts. However, the consumers had less knowledge about native advertising labels and overall knowledge about native advertising as compared to

communication professionals. The reason might be that communication professionals were more familiar with native advertising than consumers because of their working experiences.

Results are in line with previous studies in that most consumers were less likely to recognize native advertising and could not identify native advertising from any other articles in the same media (Lazauskas, 2014; Wojdynski, 2016; Jiang, McKay, Richards & Snyder, 2017).

For the opinions, the findings showed that consumers had fewer positive opinions toward native advertising, opinions toward brands and overall opinions toward native advertising as compared to communication professionals at the significant differences level 0.05, except opinions toward publishers. This is partially in line with previous studies in that consumers felt deceived by the publishers and brands when they recognized the content/message as advertising. This led to decreased perceptions of article quality, attitude toward the sponsors and intent to share the article (Lazauskas, 2014; Wojdynski, 2016; Jiang, McKay, Richards & Snyder, 2017). In this study, consumers felt positive with publishers more than brands and native advertisements. This might result from Thai consumers not understanding the natures of native advertising production that the publishers play an important role in designing and producing native advertising to be similar to any other articles in online media.

When investigating the interrelationships between the three variables of each group, the data revealed that the more communication professionals searched information in various social media channels; they had more knowledge about native advertising.

Interestingly, the more they spent time on social media, the more they developed negative opinions toward brands employing native advertising techniques. Unlike the findings of Laursen's report (2017), the data revealed that 82 percent of news organizations as publishers felt positive about native advertising and 92 percent thought that native advertising was important for their business survivals.

A reason that Thai communication professionals expressed their negative opinions toward brands might result from this research study collecting data from the communication professional individually.

So, they felt comfortable to express their negative feeling that brand owners and news organization as publishers demand them to use native advertising approach. They must follow the command, even though they are aware of this unfair practice.

The findings of this study showed that the more consumers frequently spent time in social media, searched information in various social media channels, or inspected online content from various social media sources, the more they gain knowledge about native advertising or develop positive opinions toward native advertising and brands.

Interestingly, the more they searched information in various social media channels and inspected online content from various social media sources, the more they tended to develop negative opinions toward publishers. This is similar to previous studies in that native advertising decreased perceptions of article quality, attitude toward the sponsors and intent to share the article (Lazauskas, 2014; Wojdynski, 2016; Jiang, McKay, Richards & Snyder, 2017), including articles,' publishers' and sponsors' credibility (Wu, Huang, Li, Bortree, Yang, Xiao & Wang, 2016).

In addition, this research findings partially confirmed the hierarchy-of-effects model proposed by Lavidge & Steiner (1961), stating about the progression of learning and decision-making consumer experiences of advertising from knowledge to opinions.

Suggestions

The findings of this study showed that Thai consumers lack of knowledge about native advertising forms and techniques; as such, it is suggested that Thai scholars and government agencies should work together to develop consumer protection program and possibly online curriculum to provide native advertising knowledge to consumers.

Additionally, until now, there is no rules or regulations for native advertising in Thailand. Thus, researchers should conduct a study with media organization and government agencies related to a

guideline for controlling native advertising contents and techniques in order to reduce the problem of media ethics violation and this can be done by using in-depth interviews and content analysis about native advertising presented in Thai social media.

Acknowledgement

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