

PRINT MEDIA EXPOSURE AND USES AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN THAILAND

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Abstract: The print media industry has changed dramatically with the growth of the Internet. As digital platforms are gaining popularity and while print newspapers are losing audiences, it is interesting to empirically explore the current print media exposure and uses of print media information among the university students. This research is a questionnaire survey of 400 students enrolling in Thammasat University, one of the most popular and leading universities in Thailand. The results indicated the reducing exposure to print media and the increasing exposure to social media. Among significant findings, the study also found that the students depended less on paper newspaper for daily news and information than social media, female students tended to expose to print magazine more than men,

Keywords: Print media, newspaper, magazine, exposure, media uses, university student, Thailand

Print Media Exposure and Uses among University Students in Thailand

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Thammasat University was officially founded on 27 June 1934 on the Bank of the Chao Phraya River in Bangkok. The University's founder, Prof. Dr. Pridi Banomyong, originally named Thammasat the "University of Ethics and Politics", reflecting its primary mission to offer higher education in the disciplines of law and politics to the new citizenry and prepare Thai people for their new democratic system hoping to make higher learning accessible to all. Thammasat University is also Thailand's second oldest university.

Since its initial inception, Thammasat University has evolved from an open university for law and politics to a prestigious international research university offering all levels of academic degrees and producing research across a broad spectrum of academic disciplines including social sciences, humanities, health sciences, sciences and technology. Notable university alumni include former Prime Ministers, leading politicians and government figures, Bank of Thailand governors, Supreme Court judges, provincial governors, as well as experts in various fields.

Apart from academic excellence, Thammasat students have been famous for their open expression in social and political involvements with responsibility, and are well-rounded and well-adjusted members of their community. However, in the past decades researches have also indicated the declining in political interest and involvement, and political information seeking of Thammasat students (Surasonthi K., 1996).

The growth of social media has changed the way people communicate and obtain information. Many studies empirically indicate the shifting information platform that people in almost every corner of the world rely on from traditional media to social media. In Thailand, young adults (10-19 year old) not only heavily depend on social media such as Line, Facebook, Smartphone's Application, for news and information but also have become more and more selective in their information consumption (Chaisuwan, B. and Prachaknet, P., 2015). This drastic change is putting the traditional media in Thailand, especially print media into extinction as for the past single year, more than 6 major publications and newspapers had closed down (Panyalimpanun, T., 2016).

It is therefore interesting to see how the students in a prestige University cope with the change in the shifting world of traditional and new media. This study was conducted in spring semester of 2015 (March-May) to find out how Thammasat University's undergrad students in various disciplines expose to daily news and information, and the relation between news and information exposure and the uses of print media. With questionnaires, data were collected from 400 students out of 24,385 students with non-probability sampling method across 11 faculties in social sciences, health sciences, and technology at 95% confidence level. The results reveal and alarming decline in print media exposure as followed.

Results

1. Demographically, samples constitute of more female students than male. Most of them are freshmen and are enrolling in social science schools such as Political Science, Law, and Journalism. All of them are studying at Rangsit campus of the university, about 46 kilometers from downtown Bangkok, and are living in the dormitories on campus or nearby.
2. As seen in Table 1, among traditional (old) media and social media, Thammasat students expose themselves to various Applications for daily news and information followed by television and websites. The most popular websites are *Dek – D*, *MThai*, *Pantip*, *Sanook*, *Kapook*, *BBC*, *Rakball*, *CNN*, *Nation TV*, *Bangkok Post*, *Thairath*, *ThaiPBS*, *SoccerSuck*, *SiamSport*, *BuzzFeed*, *Matichon*, *Kaosod*, *The Guardian*, and *Daily News*. Radio is the medium that they expose to the least. Among the Applications, *Facebook* (91.4%) is the most popular followed by *Twitter* (34.5%) and *Line* (32.5%).

Table 1

Numbers of student exposing to source of daily news and information

Source of daily news and information	Number	Percentage
Website	74	18.5
Application	385	96.3
Newspaper (print)	49	12.3
Television	176	44.0
Radio	32	8.0
friends	145	36.3

3. Students are more interested in entertainment news followed by international news (Table 2). Note that a high percentage of students reports that they depend on friends for news and information.

Table 2

Numbers of student exposing to different types of news

Types of news	Number	Percentage
criminal	100	25.0
international	215	53.8
political	143	35.8
economics	103	25.8
social	171	42.8
entertainment	221	55.3
agricultural	10	2.5
sport	120	30.0
educational	72	18.0
others	7	1.8

4. Regarding the exposure to print newspapers in the past twelve months, there are only 56.5 percent of samples read print newspaper. Students mostly report that they read them only once a month on average. Most of them read newspaper at their convenient time from providing place on campus such as dormitories and libraries. *Thai Rath* and *Daily News* are the most popular newspapers for them. For those who read newspapers, the main purpose is to keep abreast with the present happenings as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Purposes for reading newspaper

Purpose	Number	Percentage
To keep abreast with the present happenings	129	57.1
For educational purpose	19	8.4
For entertainment	14	6.2
To get information	13	5.8
To pass the time	51	22.6
total	226	100.0

5. For magazines, there are 58 percent of samples read them in the past 12 months. Obviously, print version of magazine is more preferable than online version with a high percentage of 94. A mix of choices of magazine genres is given by the samples such as fashion magazines, sport magazines, game magazines, documentary magazines, cooking magazines, homecare magazines, house and gardening magazines, and professional magazines. Entertainment is also the main reason students read magazines for (see Table 4).

Table 4
Purpose for reading magazine

Purpose	Number	Percentage
To keep abreast with the present happenings	28	12.0
For educational purpose	44	18.9
For entertainment	110	47.2
To get information	10	4.3
To pass the time	35	15.0
Others	6	2.6
total	233	100.0

6. There is no significant difference of gender and newspaper reading behavior of those who read print newspaper in the past 12 months in terms of preference of time in reading, and place of reading print newspaper. However, difference of gender of those who read print newspaper and frequency of reading are found significant (see Table 5).

Table 5
Frequency of print newspaper reading

Frequency of print newspaper reading	gender	
	female	male
everyday	3 (2.5)	12 (11.3)
Every other day	2 (1.7)	9 (8.5)
Once a week	25 (20.8)	13 (12.3)
2-3 times a week	19 (15.8)	21 (19.8)
Once a month	32 (26.7)	20 (18.9)
2-3 times a month	30 (25.0)	20 (18.9)
others	9 (7.5)	11 (10.4)
total	120 (100.0)	106 (100.0)
Chi-Square = 17.9158* , Sig. = .006		

From the above (Table 5) the male students who read newspaper are more likely to read the newspapers 2-3 times a week or on daily basis while female students are more likely to read the newspaper once a month or 2-3 times a month.

7. The following table (Table 6) indicates that female students (67.3%) read magazines more than men while over half of male students (53.4%) do not read magazine at all in the past year. The figures constitute significant differences between the magazine exposure in the past 12 months and gender of the samples.

Table 6
Exposure to magazines in the past 12 months

Exposure to magazines in the past 12 months	Gender	
	female	male
read	152 (67.3)	81 (46.6)
Not read	74 (32.7)	93 (53.4)
total	226 (100.0)	174 (100.0)
Chi-Square = 17.330* , Sig. = .000		

8. In terms of disciplines, differences of students from different schools of discipline (faculty) and the exposure to print newspapers in the past 12 months as well as the exposure to print magazine in the

Exposure to print newspaper in the past 12 months	Schools of discipline (Faculty)										
	Engineer	Political Science	Sirindhorn International Institute of	Law	Fine Arts	Communication	Journalism and Mass	Allied Health Science	Global Studies	Liberal Arts	Social Science and Humanity
no	15 (50.0)	13 (24.1)	17 (56.7)	22 (48.9)	9 (30.0)	16 (59.3)	8 (26.7)	16 (53.3)	32 (53.3)	11 (36.7)	15 (44.1)
yes	15 (50.0)	41 (75.9)	13 (43.3)	23 (51.1)	21 (70.0)	11 (40.7)	22 (73.3)	14 (46.7)	28 (46.7)	19 (63.3)	19 (55.9)
total	30 (100.0)	54 (100.0)	30 (100.0)	45 (100.0)	30 (100.0)	27 (100.0)	30 (100.0)	30 (100.0)	60 (100.0)	30 (100.0)	34 (100.0)
Chi-Square = 23.983*, Sig. = .008											

past 12 months are significant (see Table 7).

Table 7

Exposure to print newspapers in the past 12 months by discipline

From the above table, 59% of students from the School of Journalism, 56% of the International Institute of Technology, 53% from the School of Liberal Arts, and 53% from the School of Global Studies are among the highest non-newspaper readers whereas high percentage of newspaper readers are found from School of Political Science (75.9%), School of Allied Health Science (73.3%), and School of Fine Arts (70%) in the past 12 months.

For print magazines, 70 percent or more of students from the School of Social Science and Humanity, School of Social Administration, School of Journalism and Mass Communication, School of Fine Arts, School of Political Science has exposed to magazines in the past 12 months (see Table 8).

Table 8

Exposure to print magazines in the past 12 months by discipline

Exposure to print magazines in the past 12 months	School of disciplines (Faculty)										
	Engineer	Political Science	Sirindhorn International Institute of Technology	Law	Fine Arts	Communication	Journalism and Mass	Allied Health Science	Global Studies	Liberal Arts	Social Science and Humanity
yes	13 (43.3)	42 (77.8)	8 (26.7)	28 (62.2)	22 (73.3)	19 (70.4)	12 (40.0)	17 (56.7)	26 (43.3)	21 (70.0)	25 (73.5)
no	17 (56.7)	12 (22.2)	22 (73.3)	17 (37.8)	8 (26.7)	8 (29.6)	18 (60.0)	13 (43.3)	34 (56.7)	9 (30.0)	9 (26.5)

total	30 (10 0.0)	54 (100. 0)	30 (100. 0)	45 (100. 0)	30 (100. 0)	27 (100. 0)	30 (100. 0)	30 (100. 0)	60 (100. 0)	30 (100. 0)	34 (100. 0)
Chi-Square = 42.843*, Sig. = .000											

9. As shown in Table 9, differences between frequency of reading print newspapers and purpose of reading are significant. Those who read newspaper on daily basis, 2-3 times a week, once a week, and every other day are highly related to the intention to keep abreast with the present happenings. To read print newspapers to pass time clearly related to the less frequent reading behavior like those who read once a month (32.7%), 2-3 times a month (32%), and occasionally (30%).

Table 9

Purpose of reading and frequency of reading print newspapers

Purpose of reading print newspapers	Frequency of reading print newspapers						
	everyday	Every other day	Once a week	2-3 times a week	Once a month	2-3 times a month	occasionally
To keep abreast with the present happenings	11 (73.3)	6 (54.5)	26 (68.4)	30 (75.0)	20 (38.5)	25 (50.0)	11 (55.0)
For educational purpose	2 (13.3)	3 (27.3)	1 (2.6)	3 (7.5)	5 (9.6)	2 (4.0)	3 (15.0)
For entertainment	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.6)	2 (5.0)	6 (11.5)	5 (10.0)	0 (0.0)
To get information	2 (13.3)	1 (9.1)	0 (0.0)	4 (10.0)	4 (7.7)	2 (4.0)	0 (0.0)
To pass time	0 (0.0)	1 (9.1)	10 (26.3)	1 (2.5)	17 (32.7)	16 (32.0)	6 (30.0)
Total	15 (100.0)	11 (100.0)	38 (100.0)	40 (100.0)	52 (100.0)	50 (100.0)	20 (100.0)
Chi-Square = 47.006*, Sig. = .003							

10. Taking genders into account, the study shows significant differences in reading purposes of print newspaper among the students. Female students are found to read mainly for entertainment (53.3%) followed by educational purpose (18.5%) and passing time (15.1%) (see Table 10) while male student read for entertainment (35.8%) followed by keeping abreast with the present happenings (22.2%) and education (19.8%).

Table 10

Purpose of reading print newspapers and gender of students

Purpose of reading print newspapers	Gender of students	
	female	male
To keep abreast with the present happenings	10 (6.6)	18 (22.2)
For educational purpose	28 (18.4)	16 (19.8)
For entertainment	81 (53.3)	29 (35.8)
To get information	7 (4.6)	3 (3.7)
To pass time	23 (15.1)	12 (14.8)
others	3 (2.0)	3 (3.7)
Total	152 (100.0)	81 (100.0)
Chi-Square = 14.950* , Sig. = .011		

Conclusion

This study of the Print Media Exposure and Uses among University Students in Thailand is a pilot case study of Thammasat University which is a prestige university in Thailand. The study has shown the decline in exposure to print newspaper of students across disciplines in favor of the new media. The popular new media that the students depend on for news and information are Facebook and Twitter. These two applications are generally adopted by most Thai people. Facebook is broadly adopted by Thais of all ages. Moreover, Thammasat students can access to the internet free of charge with campus wi-fi all over the university. Country's most popular newspapers like *Thai Rath* and *Daily News* are also popular choices of online newspapers for most students.

An interesting finding is that students still read the print version of the magazines regardless of the availability of online magazines. The finding may due to the attractiveness and mobility of print magazines. Moreover, they have a much longer shelf life than newspapers; they are often browsed through by different readers for months after publication and students have more chance to spend more time per sitting with a magazine than a newspaper. However, regardless of the student favor of print magazines, the publication in Thailand is getting in trouble and more and more publications are scheduled to be out of business.

For readership, male students tend to read more newspapers than women. On the other hand, female students read more magazines than men. Interestingly, Journalism students read less newspapers and magazines as compare to students from other disciplines. In this regard, future comparative study should be conducted to find out about the uses and dependency of online media and traditional print media. Moreover, students from other universities all over the country should be included in the study to make the result more generalizable to represent Thai students as a whole.

Biography

Anucha Thirakanont, Ph.D. is the director of the Thai Khadi (Thai Studies) Research Institute at Thammasat University, Bangkok, and a permanent faculty member of the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication at the same university.

With academic backgrounds in journalism (Doctor of Philosophy (Journalism), Southern Illinois University, USA) and a rich and varied knowledge in Thai traditional arts, that ranges from Thai classical music and traditional performing arts to Thai textiles and Buddhist architecture Anucha Thirakanont considers himself a mentor as well as a cross cultural manager and promoter. Besides conducting lectures, he also organizes a number of art and culture performances and exhibitions that are shown both abroad and at home. He has been appointed committee to several public and private organizations concerning ASEAN affairs. Currently, his interest is on the changing media environment among the young Thai and its effect upon Thai culture and society.

As a director of the Thai Khadi Research Institute, he has launched a number of research projects based on cultural tourism, i.e., The Development of Cultural Capital in the old city of Bangkok: The Study of Cultural Capital for Sustainable Tourism, The Study of Festivals of Thai Tradition for Tourist Markets, etc. He is also listed as a cultural expert for the Office of Cultural Promotion, Ministry of Culture of Thailand

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