

**THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON CONSUMER'S
ATTITUDE AND PURCHASING DECISION
CASE STUDY: DIETARY SUPPLEMENT**



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Thematic paper
entitled
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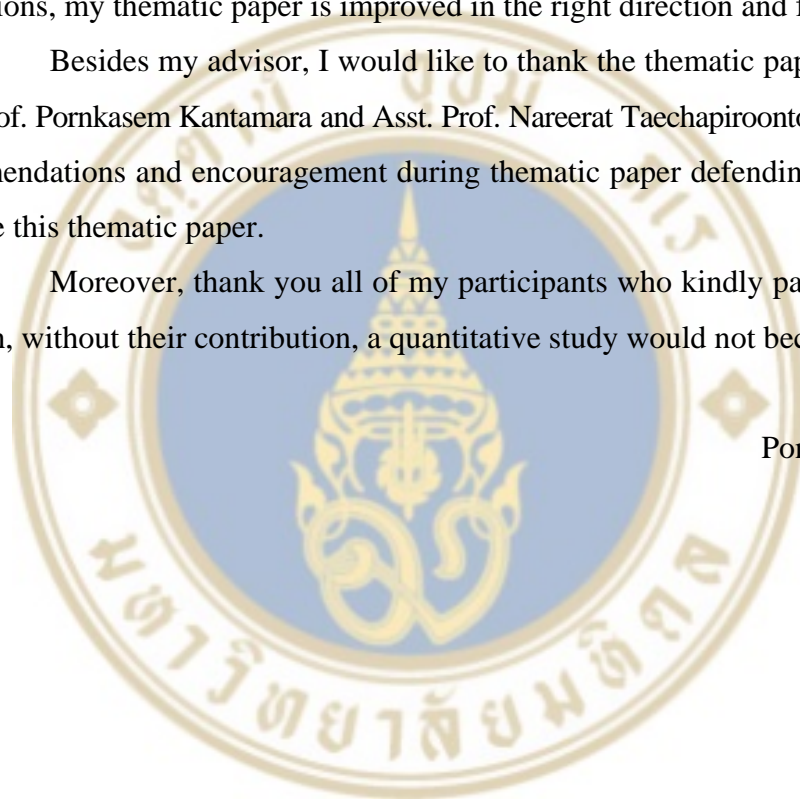
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ABSTRACT

This thematic paper determines the effects of social media marketing on consumer's attitude and purchasing decision of dietary supplement. For the scope of the paper, focusing on dietary supplement in Thai market using a qualitative approach to acquire insight information of respondents on factors towards purchasing dietary supplement and how social media marketing drives their attitude and influences them to purchase dietary supplement.

The research found that consumers highly focus on product quality and social media marketing enhances shareability, attractiveness, brand recognition, and credibility for dietary supplement, which influence their purchasing decision. Moreover, to enhance perceived quality, the marketing activity should also enhance trustworthiness from people whom consumers trust.

KEY WORDS: Social Media Marketing/ Dietary Supplement/ Consumer Attitude/ Purchasing Decision

33 pages

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The market of Dietary supplement is growing due to changes of people's consuming behavior and the effects of current economy that drives them to change life style to be more conscious on health in order to be able to work longer hour (Euromonitor, 2014). As well as the trend of social media that plays important role in people's life and business. It drives companies to do marketing and advertising on social media, which is also known as social media marketing.

Social media is a very powerful tool used for communicating between individual and contacts in social networking through specific online communication channels, which are becoming an integral part of human's life. Social media applications allow users to share contents to and participate with others freely. To reach massive audience, marketers and companies are doing marketing on social media to promote products and provide information to consumers. There are many types of product that are advertised on social media and each product needs different approaches of advertising in order to draw consumers' attention and provide the most suitable information to the consumers and make the highest benefit to the company.

According to Barker et al. (2013) social media marketing reduces advertising cost, improve customer loyalty by gaining more engagement between audiences and product or brand, and provide information for product improvement to companies. According to Kemp (2015), there are 64.0 million populations in Thailand, 30 million people are an active social media subscriber. In one day, people are spending time on internet for 5.27 hours, 3.46 hours on social media and only 2.46 hours on television. This indicates that social media is becoming more general in people's life so it is necessary for business to have their official social media account such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Google Plus, Snapchat, etc., in order to keep contacting with their customer in the easiest accessibility.

According to the benefits of social media marketing, many dietary supplement brands are trying to be competitive in the market by creating viral contents or repeating advertising to gain more attention and brand recall, which could be related or unrelated information about product or brand.

1.2 Problem Statement

Social media marketing is easy for people and companies to independently create contents on social media so the information on social media can be correct and incorrect information, which effects on consumers' attitude and it drives purchasing decision.

Dietary supplement is considered as a high involvement product because consumers involve with high rational in decision making process as it is an additional product that they consume into their body. Consumers usually consult specialists such as doctor and pharmacist or search information on reliable sources such as researches and nutrition websites. Presently, social media marketing is more confusing when is accessing to people even when they are not searching for it. Some sources provide exaggerated information that could create negative and positive word of mouth, which influences consumers' attitude and purchasing decision (Cant et al., 2006).

The research aims to analyze consumer's attitude and purchasing decision towards social media marketing of dietary supplement product in order to find out whether social media marketing enhances good attitude and ability to influence consumers to purchase the product for gaining business opportunities on creating efficient social media marketing for this industry and comprehend the behavior of dietary supplement consumers.

1.3 Research Objectives

1. Identifying factors influencing purchasing decision of dietary supplement
2. To investigate consumer attitude towards social media marketing of dietary supplement

3. Examine the effects of social media marketing on purchasing decision of dietary supplement

1.4 Research Scope

This study focuses on social media marketing of dietary supplement in Thai market due to the market of dietary supplement and social media users are growing. The research will discuss about consumers' attitude towards social media marketing of dietary supplement and factors that influence them purchase the product.



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many researches has been studied to find out the consumer's attitude towards social media marketing. This section presents a definition of social media marketing, consumer's attitude and purchasing decision and dietary supplement, a situation analysis of dietary supplement and social media marketing.

2.1 Definition

2.1.1 Social Media Marketing (SMM)

Social Media defines as “A group of Internet-based applications that enable communication amongst individual and groups, the creation and exchange of participative user-generated content, and the expression of individual and collective agency” (Warburton & Hatzipanagos, 2013)

Social Media Marketing (SMM) defines as a marketing activities; sales, promotions, public relations and customer service that are created through social networks, online communities, blogs, wikis or any other online collaborative medias (Barker et al., 2013). SMM content is created by companies or individual marketing that are members of social communities, they are promoting to draw attention from audience to engage with the content or brand that can be both direct and indirect experience toward products and services (Tella, 2015). SMM creates buzz or newsworthy events, videos, tweets, or blog, which does not necessarily have to be about products or services, to draw attention and become viral naturally (Barker et al., 2013). Presently, social media does not only come in a form of website but also smartphone applications that allow people to interact with each other and engage with contents that are created for marketing purposes.

2.1.2 Consumers' Attitude and Purchasing Decision

Consumers' Attitude defines as consumers' overall evaluation of concept that is created by affective and cognitive system (Peter and Olson, 2005). The affective responses could be favorable or unfavorable, which are including emotions, specific feelings, moods and evaluations generated without conscious while aspects of cognition are conscious thinking processes by which consumers seek and evaluate information about selected product or brand that leads to consumption decision (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1997)

2.1.3 Dietary Supplement

FDA defines a Dietary Supplement as a product intended for ingestion that contains a dietary supplement ingredient intended to add further nutritional value to the diet. A dietary ingredient consists of single substance or combination or many substances; vitamin, mineral, herb or other botanical, amino acid, a dietary substance for increasing the total dietary intake and a concentrate, or extract. Dietary supplement is found in a form of tablet, capsule, powder, flake, liquid or others, but which are not considered conventional foods.

2.2 Situation and Market Analysis

2.2.1 Dietary Supplement Trend

In terms of marketing, dietary supplement is classified as a high-involvement product as consumers need high rational in decision-making process.

According to the survey of Council for Responsible Nutrition (CRN) in 2014, aging population, increasing of lifestyle disease and the increasing of healthcare cost influence people to seek for alternative form of medicine, which is driving an increasing of dietary supplement consumption and market. In USA context, 68 percent of adults are using dietary supplement and 83 percent are confident in quality effectiveness. (CRN, 2014) Those factors effect to dietary supplement market in Thailand as well. Commercial Service Thailand reported in 2013, sales value of dietary supplement in Thailand was estimated at \$833 million and was projected to reach \$17 billion in 2018.

Additionally, Political unrest also causes worker to fear of losing job so they spend more time on working and turn to OCT (Over-The-counter) products instead of going to a doctor and dietary supplement to overcome the nutritional gap from their diets to maintain overall wellbeing (Euromonitor, 2014)

2.2.2 Social Media Marketing Trend

Social media is a powerful tool for business, it allows users to share stories freely and globally and also provides cheap global access and real-time events. The content goes viral because sharers or craters are having emotional involvement, which creates peer-to-peer product recommendations of buzz (Clarke III and Flasherty, 2005). According to Globalwebindex survey in 2014, top three motivations where users are consuming social media are to follow celebrity and celebrity's news, to stay up to date, and to network for work (Globalwebindex, 2014).

According to Syndacast analytical data in 2015, in approximately 67.9 million population in Thailand, there are 35 million internet users, 30 million social media users, 26.2 million video users and 44.6 million people who are using social media via mobile (Table 1). Common social media applications that are widely used among Thai people are Facebook, Youtube, Twitter and Instagram. The applications are used by the largest group of users, age between 18-35 years old (Vichienwanitchkul, 2015).

Table 2.1 Numbers of Active User of Social Media in Thailand in 2015

Social Media Software	Numbers of user
Facebook	30 million
Youtube	26.2 million
Twitter	4.5 million
Instagram	1.7 million

Source: Syndacast (2015)

In Jan 2015, analytical data from Globalwebindex shows that Thai people spend time on PC, tablet and mobile device more than watching television (see Table 2.2).

Table 2.2 Average Daily Use of Media in Thailand in 2015

Type of Media	Usage
PC or Tablet	5 hours 27 minutes
Mobile Phone	4 hours 6 minutes
Social Media	3 hours 46 minutes
Television	2 hours 46 minutes

Source: Globalwebindex (2015)

Presently, social media marketing is not only provided in a form of social media website but also mobile applications such as LINE and WeChat which are common IM application using in Thailand. Social media market via mobile phone in Thailand is quite appealing due to 130% mobile penetration and 25 million 3G users (Ghedin, 2014).

2.3 Consumers' Attitude and Purchasing Decision on Social Media Marketing

The consumers perception determines how they will interpret the advertisement. Message in advertisement is highly significant for getting attention from audiences, it leads them to comprehend and perceive product the way the brand tries to communicate. Following variables are attitudes that consumers have toward social media marketing.

2.3.1 Attractiveness

1. Attractiveness and Consumer's Attitude

The efficient viral advertising is made from a stand out message, creativity and execution in order to gain attention from audience to feel different and challenge their comprehension (Buttle & Maklan, 2015), as well as the ability to build relevant connection between ads content and audience, which makes it more attractive and convinces the audiences to take action (Sharma & Sign, 2010). Fully consumer produced

ads in social media, product review and testimonials, is more interesting and be able to gain more engagement from consumers than traditional advertising (Macnamara, 2010). The consumers are generating content including text, sounds and video as a host and allow people to interact with those contents, this generates more useful and updates information for the sharing content.

2. Attractiveness and Purchasing Decision

According to Hoyer and Brown (1990) product or brand attractiveness is significant for purchasing decision when consumers spend minimal time to shop. Promotional activities such as package, price and promotion are attractive to consumers. The attractiveness creates positive attitude, which also creates positive emotional responses until consumer purchase product (Goldsmith & Laffery, 2002). Social media marketing also has an ability to build a relevant connection between ads content and audience that convinces them to take action (Sharma & Sign, 2010). When audience feel relatable to the contents, they will pay more attention to the ads and product. This influences them to engage with the contents, which creates buzz and the buzz makes it more attractive and be able to lead the brand into consideration set of brand choice.

2.3.2 Brand Recognition

1. Brand Recognition and Consumer's Attitude

Social media advertising does not only provide a benefit of reach large number of target audience at lower cost than traditional advertising but also enhances consumer's attitude, which increases brand recognition (Gupta, 2009). According to Hajli (2015), social media marketing activities have positive impacts on brand awareness because it builds better customer relations and the customers are able to recall the brand when they have interest in the contents. When ads are repeated on proper media, it helps the company on creating awareness and gaining acceptance of their product by consumers (Maheshwari, 1997).

2. Brand Recognition and Purchasing Decision

According to Macdonald and Sharp (2000), brand awareness or brand recognition is an important factor influencing purchasing decision because it brings the brand into consideration set and also influences consumer to select the brand from the consideration set. As a heuristic choice, brand awareness or brand recognition

influences purchasing intention for individual decision. People will choose the brand they know or heard of because it influences on perceived better quality (Hoyer & Brown, 1990).

2.3.3 Credibility

1. Credibility and Consumer's Attitude

Social media marketing creates credibility and reliability to the brand when people who have both direct and indirect experience with knowledge towards the brand passes along the message to others, it influences the receivers to believe in the message (Bulter & Butman, 2005). Positive interaction between customer and brands providing an opportunity to gain brand value, which enhancing customer reliability (Hajli, 2015).

2. Credibility and Purchasing Decision

Brand reliability is an intangible attribute that motivates consumer's purchasing decision. According to Aaker (1991), people often purchase product they are familiar with because they feel more comfortable and secure to purchase the product that they already trust the brand and usually perceive as a good quality. However, reliable advertisement can also motivate consumer on their purchasing decision. According to the study of Griff (2014), apart from marketing mix, advertising partially convinces consumer to purchase product.

2.3.4 Shareability

1. Shareability and Consumer's Attitude

Sharing contents on social media is effortless and less time-consuming. According to Haji (2015), people are more comfortable to share information on internet more than face-to-face. The social media marketing campaign will reach a large amount of people very fast when the content goes viral, which happens when audiences are sharing the content to others. Sharing contents on social media is now becoming massively accelerated through mobile technology, people constantly connect to internet within seconds and share information such as retweet message, share location, and share pictures and videos (Hallam, 2013).

2. Shareability and Purchasing Decision

Having people to share content builds a great way to build brand awareness, people like to share their interests and want to be the first to do things (Rickman, 2012). This is related to the study of Macdonald and Sharp (2000) that brand awareness influences people's purchasing decision. When consumers use product and have emotional responses to product whether it is positive or negative, they will share the experience to others. In social media, these people are also known as product testimonials who create content through their social media account to express the feeling about the product. When audiences see the content and feel interested they will engage by give Like, share the content, or leave a comment on that content. According to the study of Zappala and Carden (2008) when many people engage on that content, it creates a buzz, which influences brand awareness to other consumers and it could be positive or negative, depending on the way sharers express feeling and personal attitude (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1997)

The consumer does not only make a decision based on firm's marketing efforts or marketing mix activities but also sociocultural environment: family, informal sources, noncommercial sources, social class, subculture and culture that takes part in influencing them to create psychological field towards the brand that are including motivation, perception, learning, personality, and attitude (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1997)

2.4 Conceptual Framework

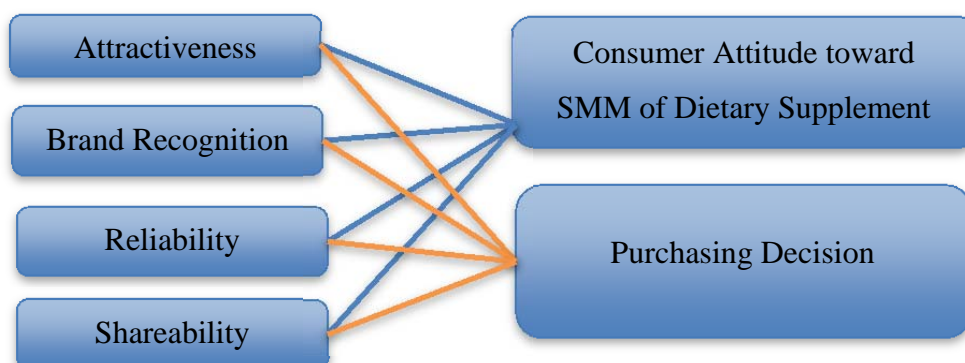


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To explore consumer's attitude towards social media marketing of dietary supplement and purchasing decision, this chapter describes research design, populations and samplings, data collection and data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

The research approach is qualitative analysis; exploratory research-imprecise answers to ambiguous problems, in order to study about consumer's attitude and purchasing decision, which involves with individual psychology field for instance, perception, behavior, feeling, leanings, personality, and attitudes. Qualitative research allows interviewer to explore respondents' attitude and beliefs and the collector is also able gain new ideas and opinion from them (Zikmund & Babin, 2007). The data will be collected through individual interview in order to get depth information from respondents, avoid group bias, and more comfortable for sensitive question. The question would cause respondents' confusion; the individual interview is making them more comfortable to ask for explanation, also it is more flexible in terms of location and time and more controllable for interviewer to conduct the data, which is suitable for limited time of doing this research (Morgan, 1997).

3.2 Populations and Sampling

The research is collected in non-probability method, convenience sample type-non-random sampling method whereby respondents are selected for convenience access, as the respondents must be social media users who have seen social media marketing of dietary supplement.

This research is collecting data from 12 respondents according to the representative number of representative sampling in qualitative analysis of Guest et al. (2006), the representative sample size for individual interview is 12 regarding to respondents who consume social media age between 19-35 year old-the average age of people who consume social media in Thailand. The respondents are from collectors' Facebook contacts who are family, friends, and gym members.

3.3 Data Collection

The data collection is conducted by individual interview also known as one-on-one interview. The research aims to explore consumer's attitude; the questions may cause complication to respondents, it is more comfortable for the respondents to ask for explanation and be able to share their personal beliefs and in-depth attitude (Morgan, 1997).

In interviewing process, the interview ran with informal conversation in order to create comfortable atmosphere, which made respondents were able to talk freely. Interviewer started the interview by greeting the respondent and talked about general topics in order to make him/her feels more comfortable and then started to provide an information about the research topic, questions and time consuming for the interview, which were approximately 20 minutes and started to ask for the respondent's comprehension about the topic and checked whether he/she had seen the social media marketing of dietary supplement before and then checked his/her knowledge about social media marketing; if he/she did not understand, the interviewer would give an explanation, asked his/her demographic questions and went straight to the attitude questions.

The questions are opened-end questions that are divided into four parts: demographic question, introduction question, exploratory question (part one) and comprehensive question (part two). According to scope of sampling, age between 19-35 year-old who have seen social media marketing of dietary supplement, the demographic questions and introduction questions are for screening target respondents, the interview will be ended if they are not the target. The question part one is about exploring consumer's attitudes about social media marketing of dietary supplements and the question part

two is about to comprehend the factors that influence consumer attitudes and purchasing decisions in relation to social media marketing of dietary supplements. At the end of each questions, the respondents will be asked whether their attitude impacts their purchasing decision to ensure that each variables significantly influence their decision. Key questions for the interview are as follows;

3.3.1 Demographic Question

1. Name
2. Gender
3. Age
4. Occupation

3.3.2 Introduction

1. Have you seen social media marketing such as advertisements or product reviews of dietary supplements on social media before?
2. What brands and products have you seen?

Part 1: To explore consumer's attitudes about social media marketing of dietary supplements

3. How do you feel about the brands?
4. In your opinion, is it important for dietary supplements to do social media marketing?

Part 2: To comprehend the factors that influence consumer attitudes and purchasing decisions in relation to social media marketing of dietary supplements

5. Do you search for information about dietary supplement products before buying?
6. What source do you use to search for information before buying?
7. What are the three most important factors you consider when buying dietary supplements?
8. In your opinion, what are the most important types of information advertising content should provide in advertisements for dietary supplement products?
9. Do you think it is important for brands to do traditional adds such as TV, radio, billboards, or magazines?

10. Do you think social media marketing makes the dietary supplement brand more interesting than traditional marketing? How?

11. Does social media marketing help you remember the brand of dietary supplements? How?

12. Has social media marketing provided you with any more understandable information about dietary supplements?

13. Do you think it is important for dietary supplement advertising to include examples of other consumer's result after using the product?

14. Do these examples effect your attitude toward dietary supplement?

15. If you find one content of social media marketing of dietary supplement that you are interested, are you comfortable to share that content on social media applications?

16. Have you ever bought any dietary supplement products that you have seen advertised on social media?

17. How does social media influence your decision making process when buying dietary supplements?

3.4 Data Analysis

According to Goodwin (1996) the heart of data analysis for qualitative analysis is coding, which can be accomplished during data collection and after data collection. Data analysis during data collection is including scoping out and memoing. It is necessary for the researchers to clarify the purposes of the research before starting the observation process. The researchers may start asking broad questions, for instance social media application habits, favorite bloggers, or common search words, in order to analyze social media consumption behavior. After conducting basic research, the researcher can dig deeper and focus on more details in targeted areas. To collect those data, the researcher needs to write down important point and ask respondent for more explanation when the given data is complicated, which helps researcher to clarify his thinking and explore rational and fill the miss.

After the researcher memo the data, he may go through the data analysis after data collection. This process is including two major types of coding: axial coding and selective coding (Strauss & Carbin, 1990). Axial coding is to put data together in a meaningful way by looking connections among categories, for instance, ages of respondents and factors towards their purchasing decision of dietary supplement or identifying factors towards the purchasing decision. After that each variables will be grouping into categories so the researcher is be able to identify the similarities, differences, and relationship of those variables for further development and for understandable presenting the findings be able to conclude and make a consumptions and recommendations.



CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter describes findings and discussion including: demographic data, factors towards purchasing decision of dietary supplement and respondents' attitude towards social media marketing of dietary supplement. Each topic will be discussed and analyzed as follows:

4.1 Demographic Data

The total respondents are 12 people; five are male and seven are female who consume social media and have seen social media marketing of dietary supplement. The data analysis based on one-on-one interviews. The respondents spent approximately 20 minutes to answer 15 questions. The research found that all 12 respondents have seen social media marketing from Facebook, Instagram, Google search, YouTube, which are Pre-roll ads, banners, testimonials, and other marketing activities campaign for raising engagement.

4.2 Factors towards Purchasing Decision on Dietary Supplement

Table 4.1 The Respondents' Factor towards Purchasing Decision of Dietary Supplement

Respondents	1st Ranking	2nd Ranking	3rd Ranking
1	Manufacturer	Nutrition	Value of money
2	Nutrition	Attractive packaging	No disgusting smell
3	Value of money	Performance	FDA Approved
4	Nutrition	Value of money	FDA Approved
5	Ingredient	Brand Reputation	Value of money

Table 4.1 The Respondents' Factor towards Purchasing Decision of Dietary Supplement (cont.)

Respondents	1st Ranking	2nd Ranking	3rd Ranking
6	Ingredient	Value of money	No Chemical
7	Brand Reputation	Value of money	Ingredient
8	Brand Reputation	Pharmacist Recommended	Nutrition
9	Nutrition	Side Effects	FDA Approved
10	FDA Approved	Ingredient	Nutrition
11	Manufacturer	Brand Reputation	Nutrition
12	Ingredient	Brand Reputation	Nutrition

As can be seen from Table 3, the research found that the purchasing decision on dietary supplement based on product's quality and value of money. The product quality represents in a form of FDA approval, well-known national manufacturer, brand reputation, positive word of mouth, product's performance, attractiveness in advertising, information provided, for instance, nutrition fact, ingredient and non chemical guarantee. Following messages were mentioned by the respondents.

"I am not a young age, I am 32, and I am very careful on taking dietary supplement, I only buy trustworthy brands even it is expensive because I highly aware of low quality ingredients and side effects and I believe that consuming cheap dietary supplement will cause me even higher when it damages my body" (Female, Age 32, Sales Executive)

"Product quality is very important for dietary supplement but at the end we buy what we can afford" (Female, Age 27, Sport Product Manager)

The findings indicate that consumers are a quality conscious when they choose dietary supplement as they are aware of bad effects more than pricing. This benefits to business on creating efficient communication message in order to be more attractive and gain brand reliability as consumer perceive reliability as quality (Aaker, 1991).

4.3 Consumers' Attitude towards Social Media Marketing of Dietary Supplement

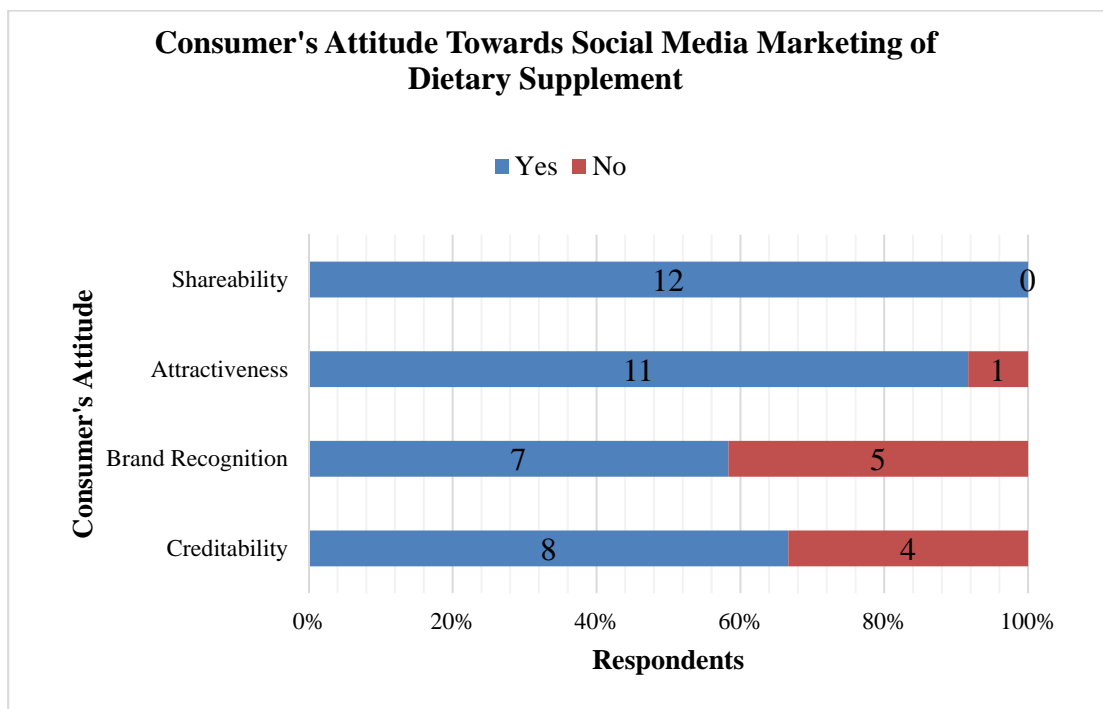


Figure 4.1 Respondents' attitude towards social media marketing of dietary supplement

4.3.1 Shareability

As shown in Figure 1, all 12 respondents are more comfortable to share information on social media than face-to-face because it is more convenience and only people who are interested in the content will engage with the post, it makes the conversation better when talking to people who want to talk about the same interests as the sharer may gain even more information from engagers when they participate with the post and provide some more information. Below messages were mentioned to support this variable.

“I am more comfortable to share information about dietary supplement on social media because it is more convenience and I believe it is beneficial to many of my friends on Facebook when they read it” (Male, Age 24, Tutor)

“I believe that sharing contents about dietary supplement or health will benefit to everyone who read it, it not just easier than talking face-to-face but it provides more information and more likely to be accurate and reach more people when I share the original content directly on social media, if I talk to someone I would miss something or provide others wrong information because I cannot remember it all” (Female, Age 25, Hotel Sales Executive)

The findings indicate that consumers are comfortable to share contents about dietary supplement on social media more than face-to-face (Haji, 2015). It is more convenience and people can choose to read or not to read according to their interest and it is faster to spread the news to others (Hallam, 2013).

Respondents also talked about how viral contents helps them remember the product and brand, which leads to purchasing intention.

“There are too many dietary supplement brands on social media, it is hard to recall all those brands that I have seen, unless if everyone is talking about it and It automatically becomes one of my brand choice” (Female, Age 34, Sale executive)

“I want to try one product that I have always seen on social media because everyone is talking about it, it must be a good product.” (Female, Age 25, HR executive)

The findings indicate that shareability influences consumers' purchasing decision because when the consumers are able to recall the brand, it will be their brand of choice (Macdonald and Sharp, 2000). The buzz also creates emotional responses that influences consumers to try the product (Zappala & Carden, 2008).

4.3.2 Attractiveness

The research found all respondents think that social media marketing is important to dietary supplement brand and there are 11 respondents who think social media marketing is more attractive than traditional marketing. Supportive messages that respondents mentioned during the interview as follows.

“It is still important to do marketing on traditional media because there are many non social media consumers who consume dietary supplement and the company still want to reach them, but social media marketing just makes ads more

interesting that it is more interactive and people can share the contents that they are interested to their friends” (Male, Age 31, Pharmacist)

“I am a social media junkie, I’m on social media all the time, on my phone, tablet and computer. Social media is always my choice of learning about a product, I like to watch and read product’s review to compare brands and I always find everything I’m looking for on internet, this is a thing traditional marketing cannot give to consumers” (Female, Age 25, HR executive)

“When I see a photo or messages that I feel related to, I will be curious and then I fall into a social media trap for an hour reading about it, watching it and even do further research” (Male, Age 28, Engineer)

The findings indicate that social media marketing has more attractive contents than traditional marketing due to more informative, up-to-date, and it is also more interesting when the contents are created by real users or well-known bloggers who use the product (Macnamara, 2010). Consumers also feel different with the creativity of presenting product by bloggers (Buttle & Maklan, 2015) as well as the ability to build relevant connection between audience and contents make the ads more interesting for them. The consumers are also likely to spend more time on social media when they can access from their mobile phone.

However, two respondents mentioned that celebrity endorsement compelling the ads but makes the product less attractive.

“I don’t like how they use celebrity to endorse the brand, who is going to believe that they actually take it, especially infamous brands? seeing celebrities holding the product and making a beautiful photograph just gives me the feeling of how fake the brand is” (Female Age 25, Hotel Sales Executive)

“Celebrities make social media ads more attractive but makes the product less interesting, unless they really consume it long enough to see the result” (Female, Age 25, Master Degree Student)

The findings indicate that consumers are interested in product information more than brand image. They feel unrelated with celebrities’ life style and it is hard to believe that they really use the product and the information they give would not be true.

Respondents admitted that advertisement and product attractiveness influences them to purchase product as follows.

“I wanted to have white skin so I searched for a good dietary supplement to help brightening my skin and I found one nice package of Glutathione capsule, after two or three sources of information, I went straight to the drugstore” (Female Age 25, Hotel Sales Executive)

“I remembered seeing Facebook retargeting ads about how to lose 8 kilograms in one month and I noticed again after I got an ordering confirmation” (Female, Age 27, Product Manager)

This indicates that attractiveness of ads and product are a crucial factor influencing consumers to purchase product by creating an excitement about relatable contents and a feeling of being interested in a product (Goldsmith & Laffery, 2002). The consumers also make a quick purchasing decision by seeing attractive advertisement or content (Hoyer & Brown, 1990).

4.3.3 Brand Recognition

There are seven respondents only remember famous brand, which has high repeat and is presented by relatable contents and five respondents could not remember the brand at all but only remember some details from the ads such as color of product, presenter, or type of dietary supplement. The respondents mentioned as following

“I just remember one weight loss drink, which I can’t recall the brand; it keeps showing on the right side of my Facebook” (Female, Age 34, Sale Executive)

“I’m pretty sure I’ve seen many dietary supplement ads but I only remember one dietary supplement for beauty because I’m interested in the product” (Female, Age 26, Display Manager)

Five respondents could not remember the brand at all but only remember contents such as the nutrition information, effects of the product, and brand ambassador. Brand confusion occurs to many respondents due to many brands have high similarity in terms of nutrition, packaging, and ads style. Below is the message from respondent that supports the content.

“I’ve seen too many dietary supplement ads on social media but I can’t even remember one, they all look the same” (Female, Age 25, HR administrator)

Moreover, some unrelated ads that always pops up is irritating consumers and makes them have negative emotional response toward those ads. Below is the message from the respondent.

“I only know that I have seen many dietary supplement advertising on social media but I don’t remember the brand or nutrition or anything because It always comes up when I don’t need it” (Male, Age 27, Engineer)

The findings indicate that consumers are able to recall the brand when they are interested in contents or the product (Hajli, 2015). Consumers also gain brand awareness from repeated ads (Maheshwari, 1997). Brand recognition for consumers based on their interest, the related contents work very well on gaining brand recognition and brand recall. The following causes are examples provided from interviewees.

“I walked into the drugstore for buying the dietary supplement that I have taken, I always compare it with a new brand on the shelf but I still trust the brand I know more than the new brand” (Male, Age 34, Hotel owner)

“I only remember famous brand and it is easy for me to buy the well-known brand, it saves my time from researching for information because famous brands are more likely to sell good product” (Female, Age 26, Display Manager)

The findings indicate that brand recognition influences consumers’ purchasing decision because the well recognized product will automatically become their brand choice (Macdonald & Sharp, 2000). It makes the purchasing decision more quickly and easier for consumer to notice the high recognition brand on social media as they perceive quality of the brand they already know (Hoyer & Brown, 1990).

4.3.4 Credibility

The research found that eight respondents agree that information from social media is reliable, four respondents never believe information about dietary supplement on social media, they are more likely to trust doctor, pharmacist, and people they know such as friends and family who use product. The following causes are examples provided from interviewees.

“Information about dietary supplement from social media can be trustable and untrustable, it depends on the source of information, I like to read product review from real users on big website, or reviews from famous bloggers that has high rating

and engagement of the ads is what makes me believe more” (Female, Age 25, HR administrator)

“I think the best part of information from social media is it is very up-to-date and more interesting when it comes from real users, which makes me think it is more reliable and that also makes the product or brand more interesting” (Female, Age 25, Student).

“I don’t believe in the information of dietary supplement on social media, when I need information I ask pharmacist and doctor, I don’t take it if they don’t recommend me to” (Female, Age 32, Sales Executive)

“Social media provides independent information and sometimes it is not enough for making decision on buying dietary supplement, and not everyone gets result, I need more information from research, book, or specialist” (Male, Age 24, Tutor)

The findings indicate that information about dietary supplement from social media is trustable because it is up-to-date, is shared by real users or people who consumers know (Bulter & Butman, 2005). This also makes the brand more valuable by gaining consumer’s reliability (Hajli, 2015). The credibility of ads also depends on source of information and people who shares it. Many times audience think that the information is fake especially the photo of testimonial, before and after using product, which they think it could be retouched and some product represents unrealistic result. However, the consumers are aware on product’s result because the products work differently on different people’s body.

Respondents also agree that creditability of ads impacts on their purchasing decision because they perceive that reliable and realistic information from the ads are from trustable company that concerns about consumer’s health. However, it is very easy for consumers to switch brand when specialists or people they know convince them to buy other brands. The following causes are examples provided from interviewees.

“I went to drug store to buy one dietary supplement that I saw on social media, pharmacist recommended me another brand with the same function, so I suddenly switched to that brand because I believed the specialist know better and would recommend better product or if they tell me that the product is unnecessary, I won’t take it” (Female Age 25, Hotel Sales Executive)

“The ads on social media may look very tempting, but I will consult my mom if she has taken those dietary supplement before, if my mom has it and says it is good I will buy it” (Female, Age 26, Display manager)

This indicates that specialists and people they trust are an important influencer that impacts on their purchasing decision because the influencers are familiar with the product and usually are a real user and it gains trust from the buyers and it makes them feel more comfortable to purchase the product (Aaker, 1991) as well as the reliable advertising influences them to purchase the product (Griff , 2014).



CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Practical implications

Dietary supplement in Thai market has strong competition due to the marketing is growing, which makes many brands enter to the industry. To be competitive in the market, the company must understand target audience and how to communicate with them. Social media marketing is the most effective tool to reach high number of target audiences and is inexpensive comparing to advertising on traditional media, it creates contents and use social network to share the contents from one user to many users, also known as electronic word or mouth (eWOM), which generates attitude and emotional responses towards ads and product and influences purchasing decision.

This research implies communication approach for target consumers of dietary supplement who consume social media, age between 19-35 year-old. According to the research findings on factor towards purchasing decision of dietary supplement, consumers have highest concern on product quality more than brand image, which means the company should give useful information and facts about the product in order to become consumer's brand choice and convinces them to buy the product. Using top celebrity to endorse the product would not be necessary when people are willing to invest time to learn about the product in order to find a good and the most suitable product for them. This will make audience listen to the product and brand more and also save advertising cost for company.

According to the findings of attitude and purchasing decision part, shareability, attractiveness, brand recognition and reliability are an attitude that consumers have towards social media marketing of dietary supplement, which influences their purchasing decision. To create effective communication through social media, the contents must be able to gain attention, reliability, shareable and outstanding in order to gain brand recognition and brand recall. Ability to create relatable contents is the key to draw attention from audience and it influences them to share to other social networking contacts

because when the contents touch consumers' feeling, they will feel like being a part of the contents or brand. Real experience sharing or testimonials also draw attention and gain reliability from consumers when it is providing facts and useful information to the consumers. It also saves consumers time and money on testing for the right product for them as they do not need to try many products by themselves. Using famous bloggers or creating marketing campaign that requires participants to share their experience of using product is one way of creating viral contents in order to gain brand recognition and try to get influencers such as dietary supplement specialist involve in ads or activities that related to family or friends to get more engagement as dietary supplement will be more trustable when a member of the consumer's family uses it because it makes they feel more familiar and safer.

To conclude, the company should create contents that provide facts about product and useful information to gain trust from consumers. The contents must be related between brand and audience or give something to sharer such as a very new information or new research about the dietary supplment in order to create more attractiveness and influences consumer to share the contents to others, which makes others consumers who see the viral contents remember the brands. Moreover, product review from real users are very important, it makes consumer perceive the product more.

5.2 Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

Limitations of this research are sampling; too small sample size and narrow scope of respondents. According to wide age range of target respondents, age 19-35 year-old, the findings in various age are very different so to conduct data from more people will help the findings more understand able and the researcher is able to find relationship or group data easier. Most respondents are a master student who studies business, so they are likely to have similar attitude, which limits the exploration of different attitude from different characteristics.

In future research, the researcher should increase sample size and expand scope of respondents and categorize them into characteristics such as generation or consuming behavior for better understanding in terms of characteristic of value consumers who are likely to consume social media and product and characteristics of people who are less likely to consume in order to understand their attitude and purchasing decision more.



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Appendix A: Interview Question

Studied in the effects of social media marketing on consumer's attitude and purchasing decision. Case study: Dietary supplement.

Demographic Question

1. Name
2. Gender
3. Age
4. Occupation

Introduction

1. Have you seen social media marketing such as advertisements or product reviews of dietary supplements on social media before?
2. What brands and products have you seen?

Part 1: To explore consumer's attitudes about social media marketing of dietary supplements

3. How do you feel about the brands?
4. In your opinion, is it important for dietary supplements to do social media marketing?

Part 2: To comprehend the factors that influence consumer attitudes and purchasing decisions in relation to social media marketing of dietary supplements

5. Do you search for information about dietary supplement products before buying?
6. What source do you use to search for information before buying?
7. What are the three most important factors you consider when buying dietary supplements?
8. In your opinion, what are the most important types of information advertising content should provide in advertisements for dietary supplement products?

9. Do you think it is important for brands to do traditional adds such as TV, radio, billboards, or magazines?

10. Do you think social media marketing makes the dietary supplement brand more interesting than traditional marketing? How?

11. Does social media marketing help you remember the brand of dietary supplements? How?

12. Has social media marketing provided you with any more understandable information about dietary supplements?

13. Do you think it is important for dietary supplement advertising to include examples of other consumer's result after using the product?

14. Do these examples effect your attitude toward dietary supplement?

15. If you find one content of social media marketing of dietary supplement that you are interested, are you comfortable to share that content on social media applications?

16. Have you ever bought any dietary supplement products that you have seen advertised on social media?

17. How does social media influence your decision making process when buying dietary supplements?