CONSUMERS' PERCEPTION AND BEHAVIOR TOWARD USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO SEARCH FOR INFORMATION FOR RESTAURANTS IN BANGKOK

BY

MISS KANTIYA CHAVALERTSAKUL

AN INDEPENDENT STUDY SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF SCIENCE PROGRAM IN MARKETING
(INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM)
FACULTY OF COMMERCE AND ACCOUNTANCY
THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC YEAR 2015

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ENTITLED

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BANGKOK

was approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for
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ABSTRACT

Social media is fundamentally changing the way information is distributed and the way people search for information before they purchase due its low transaction cost, access to plentiful information, and accessibility anywhere and anytime. Restaurants are the most popular industry that consumers search through mobile applications and web browsers. More and more consumers read online reviews from other consumers before buying. This behavioral trend has made social media one of the most influential communication channels between restaurants operators and consumers. This study is a contemporary topic in applied marketing.

The study was conducted to investigate consumers' behavior and perception toward using social media to search for information about restaurants in Bangkok. Objectives of the studies are to understand when consumers use social media to search for information on restaurants, to understand how consumers start their online search process, to identify influential social media websites, to find out what factors in social media that influences consumers' intention to visit restaurants, to find out key selection criteria that influence their intention to visit restaurants, and to find out the most influential source of information among consumers.

The research methods used in this study were exploratory and descriptive research. Exploratory research included secondary research and in-depth interview with five people. Descriptive research was accomplished by surveying 147 respondents through online and offline questionnaires. The target respondents were university students or jobbers, aged between 18 – 35 years old, who have used social media websites to search for information on restaurants in Bangkok in the past 3 months. The data from quantitative survey was input into SPSS for data analysis.

The study findings indicate that consumers use social media mainly to find out more information on specific restaurants; to find restaurants in certain locations; and to find restaurants for special occasions. Majority of consumers start their online search process by using search engine. Influential social media are Pantip, Facebook, and Wongnai respectively. After obtaining information from information search process, key factors that enhance consumer intention to visit the restaurant are taste, price, and location. The keys factors in social media websites that influence consumer intention to visit the restaurant are availability of photos, source credibility, sufficient information, numbers of comment, recent update of information and quality of review. Restaurant rating and review sites and Friends and Family in social media have the greatest impact on customers' intention to visit the restaurant.

Thus, restaurant operators should have their own social media official sites that provide sufficient information, quality of review, and up-to-date information. Restaurant operators may consider promoting their restaurant in restaurant review sites; however, they should monitor both positive and negative comments of users in social media sites. Moreover, restaurant operators should encourage consumers to share content about the restaurants in consumers' social media since consumers are more likely to be influenced by friend and family.

Keyword: Social media, consumers, information search, restaurant

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Social media: an influential communication channel

Over the past ten years, the Internet has become one of the most effective communication media. The Internet usage is constantly growing worldwide, especially among young and well-educated people, who commonly use Internet to find information (Lagrosen, 2005). More people are relying on Internet to search for information due its low transaction cost, access to plentiful information, and accessibility anywhere and anytime. Moreover, its unique interactive characteristic provides consumers more interactive communications, unlike traditional media such as TV and newspapers etc. Internet has changed the way people receive and share information (Porter 2001).

Social media are Internet-based applications that allow consumers to generate and share content such as texts, pictures, and video clips with other consumers in virtual communities and networks. Social media consist of many applications such as Internet forums, weblogs, microbloggings, wikis, and collaborative tagging etc (Suanpang 2014).

Restaurants are the most highly searched industries by consumers through mobile applications and web browsers. According to the study from SinglePlatform at Constant Contact and Chadwick Martin Bailey (2013), more than 80 percent of consumers use mobile applications and web browser to search for restaurants prior to their visits. Recently, Thailand has witnessed a rise in social media and an emergence of food-focused media. One of the most popular social media websites is Facebook. According to INTAGE Thailand (2014), the number of Facebook users reached 12.8 million in Bangkok alone. This behavioral trend has made social media one of the most influential communication channels between marketers and consumers.

1.2 Purpose of the study

      This study is a contemporary topic in applied marketing. The purpose of this study is to investigate consumers' behavior and perception toward using social media to search for information about restaurants in Bangkok. The results of this study are beneficial for restaurants operators to help them effectively communicate with the consumers.

1.3 Definitions used in this research

      Social media are Internet-based applications that allow consumers to generate and share content such as texts, pictures, and video clips with other consumers in virtual communities and networks. Social media consists of many applications such as Internet forums, weblogs, microbloggings, wikis, and collaborative tagging etc (Suanpang 2014).

      Consumers refer to people who have used social media websites to search for information on restaurants in Bangkok in the past 3 months.

1.4 Research Objectives

1.4.1 To explore and determine consumer behavior toward using social media to search for restaurants in Bangkok

      1.4.1.1 To understand the purpose that consumers use social media to search for restaurants

      1.4.1.2 To explore how consumers start their online search process (e.g. direct access to websites, search engine, social media of friend and family)

      1.4.1.3 To examine which sources of information in the search results page the consumers would give the priority to (e.g. the press, consumers' review websites, Advertising, restaurants official sites)

      1.4.1.4 To find out social media websites consumers use to search for information on restaurants (eg. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Food Review Websites, Youtube)

1.4.2 To understand consumers perception and attitude toward using social media to search for restaurant in Bangkok

1.4.2.1 To determine the key factors that enhance consumer intention to visit the restaurant based on the acquired information (e.g. price, location, promotion and offers, variety of choices of menu, qualities of services, quality of taste, atmosphere)

1.4.2.2 To determine the key factors in the social media websites that influence consumer intention to visit the restaurant (e.g. numbers of likes, numbers of shares, numbers of positive comment, numbers of negative comment, appear in top search results, credibility of the medium, sufficient information)

1.4.2.3 To determine what social media websites that influence consumer intention to visit the restaurants (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Food Review Websites, Youtube)

1.4.2.4 To determine which source of information influence consumer intention to visit the restaurant the most (eg. the press, consumers' review websites, friends, family, Advertising, restaurants official sites)

CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Consumer Decision Making Process

A numbers of stage models regarding the consumer buying decision process have been developed by marketing scholars, however, there are 5 stages that consumers typically pass through which are:

1. Problem Recognition: consumers realize that they have problem or need triggered by internal stimulus such as feeling hungry or thirsty; and external stimulus such as seeing a friend's new mobile phone and thinking to make a purchase (Kotler and Keller, 2009, p.189).

2. Information Search: consumers begin to collect information to assist decision making (Kotler and Keller, 2009, p.189).

3. Evaluation of Alternatives: consumers compare the acquired information and evaluate the attributes of each alternative (Kotler and Keller, 2009, p.190).

4. Purchase Decision: consumers execute purchase intention and decide what brands or products to choose (Kotler and Keller, 2009, p.192).

5. Post Purchase Behavior: consumers use and dispose the products or services. Satisfied customers are more likely to repurchase and recommend others about the products or services (Kotler and Keller 2009, p.194).

This study will focus on information search process, the second stage of consumer buying decision process. Engel, Blackwell, and Miniard (1995) define information search as "the motivated activation of knowledge stored in memory or acquisition of information from the environment." They suggest that information can be acquired internally through retrieving knowledge from past experience; or externally such as collecting information from the environment (Engel et al., 1995). For external sources, there are four major sources of information that consumers turn

to (Kotler and Keller, 2009, p.189). They are:

1. Personal sources such as friends and family

2. Commercial sources such as advertising and websites

3. Public sources such as mass media and consumer rating organization

4. Experiential sources such as visiting the physical store

This study will classify external sources of information into 3 groups, which are;

1. Personal sources such as friends and family

2. Commercial sources such as restaurant official sites and Advertising

3. Public sources such as the press, consumer rating websites, and bloggers

2.2 Social Media Classification

Social media can be classified into different types. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), in their Business Horizons article, they classified social media into six types as follow;

First, collaborative projects allow many end-users to jointly create content at the same time. They enable users to add, edit, and delete the content in real time. Wikipedia is one of the most popular collaborative projects that is available in more than 230 languages (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010)

Second, blogs are derived from the word web and log. They are online journals that allow users to present or share their personal activities and ideas, with multitude of different purposes ranging from personal diaries to summaries of a specific content topic; for example Wordpress.com and Bloggang.com. Microblogging such as Twitter, is a sub category of blogs, but it allows users to publish within 140 characters limit for one message (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010).

Third, content communities includes photo-sharing sites, video sharing sites, slide sharing sites, document sharing sites, serve as free contents for all online users, in which users can access to the content without any charge. Youtube is one good

example. (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010).

Fourth, social networking sites provide a web-based platform that allows users to create their own profile information and build up their social network relations amongst people including actual friends, family, or even strangers, who share similar interests or activities. MySpace, LinkedIn, Facebook are examples of social networking sites (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010).

Fifth, virtual worlds are three-dimensional or 3D platforms that simulate the real life and environment. The users are enabled to design their own avatar characters and interact with each other as if they are in the real life situation. However, in the virtual game worlds such as World of Warcraft, users are required to follow the strict rules in the context of a massively multi-player online role-playing game (MMORPG) (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010).

Sixth, virtual social worlds are another form of virtual world's three-dimensional platforms. The users are enabled to design their own avatar character and interact with each other as same as they are in the real life situation. However, in the virtual social worlds, users are allowed for unlimited range of possible interactions with each other and self-presentation strategies. Second Life is a good example (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010).

For the purpose of this study, three social media that companies often used to communicate with their customers are considered. These are;

1. Blogs

2. Content communities

3. Social networking sites

2.3 The role of social media role in consumer information search

Social media is fundamentally changing the way information is distributed and the way people search for information before they purchase (Suanpang 2014). According to the study done by GE Capital Retail Bank on its second annual major purchase shopper (2013), over 80 percent of consumers do research online before

they visit the store (*RetailingToday* 2013). And 61 percent of consumers read online reviews from others consumers before buying (*Mindwhatblog* 2014).

In tourism industry, social media has gained popularity among online travelers and has reshaped the way people search for information when making travel plan (Suanpang 2014; Xiang and Gretzel 2010). In Thailand, Facebook is the most popular social media website that traveler use to search for tourism-related information. The information they look for include prices, quality of services, variety of choices of the tourism destination, restaurants etc. Travelers commonly use social media to share their tourism experience with their friends (Suanpang 2014).

Consumers perceive retailer/manufacturer websites to be useful when they can acquire full information about the products they are searching for to make purchase decision (Bei and Chen 2004). However, when consumers search for information about experience products such as dining at the new restaurants or tour package, they often rely more on online information from other consumers such as consumer rating score, consumers review; and neutral sources such as web articles (Bei and Chen 2004). Consumers perceive information from their friends and other consumers in social media to be more trustworthy than those provided by marketer or business websites (Suanpang 2014; Smith et al., 2005).

Online review is an interactive way that consumers use to share information and opinion about the products or services with others (Bei, Chen, Rha, & Widdows, 2004). In restaurant industry, the restaurant reviews can be classified into 2 types, which are peer-created reviews and expert-created reviews (Smith et al., 2005). In Thailand, examples of peer-created reviews are Wongnai.com, Openrice.com, and Pantip.com; and expert-created reviews include BK Magazine online, BKKmenu.com, and Thailand Tatler Magazine online etc. Consumers tend to believe the reviews from friends and other consumers rather than the reviews provided by experts or restaurant business websites (Smith et al., 2005). The information quality and sources credibility of online reviews can greatly influence consumers' intention to visit the restaurants (Choi and OK 2011).

As stated, social media play and influential role in consumer information search to assist them in making decision. Marketers of experience products such as

restaurant operators should provide more online information for consumers since those information can provide consumers indirect experiences with products or services (Bei et al 2004). However, research on social media in information search process among Thai consumers is quite limited. In addition, research on social media and Thai restaurant industry often focus on how online reviews influence on consumers making decision on restaurant, but there are more independent variables that can influence consumer purchase intention during information search process. Furthermore, in Thailand, researches on consumer's behavior and attitude toward using social media to search for information have been done in other industries, but not specifically focus on restaurant industry in Bangkok. Therefore, the study findings will be worthwhile for restaurants operators in Bangkok to understand consumers' perception and behavior toward using social media to search for information about restaurants in Bangkok in order to provide the right information and medium to effectively communicate with the consumers.

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted in two methods, which were exploratory research method and descriptive research method

3.1 Exploratory Research Method

3.1.1 Secondary Data

The secondary sources of data included published sources and websites such as Retailing Today, Single Platform at Constant Contact, blogs, online newspapers, as well as academic journals.

The objective for secondary research

1. To understand consumers online information search process
2. To understand the role of social media in online information search in restaurant industry
3. To understand and analyze consumers in terms of attitude, perception, and behavior toward using social media to search for information on restaurant

3.1.2 In-depth Interview

The in-depth interviews involved the discussion to gather ideas and opinions from consumers to explore general perception and behavior toward using social media to search for restaurants before designing questionnaire. The in-depth interviews were conducted on January 10 and 14, 2016 among 5 respondents (3 females and 2 male) who live in Bangkok metropolitan area. They have used social media to search for information on restaurants in Bangkok in the past 3 months.

3.2 Descriptive Research Method

The descriptive research method was aimed to describe consumers' behavior, perceptions, and attitudes towards using social media to search for information about restaurants in Bangkok. The questionnaire was employed under descriptive research method.

3.2.1 Questionnaire

Before launching the official questionnaires, the pilot tests were sent to 20 respondents to obtain the results and feedback. Revisions were made according to the feedback. Then, the official questionnaires were distributed to 30 offline respondents and 173 online respondents. The data was then input into SPSS for data analysis.

The objective for Questionnaire

1. To explore and determine consumer behavior toward using social media to search for restaurants in Bangkok

- To understand the purpose that consumers use social media to search for restaurants
- To explore how consumers start their online search process (e.g. direct access to websites, search engine, social media of friend and family)
- To examine which sources of information in the search results page the consumers would give the priority to (e.g. the press, consumers' review websites, Advertising, restaurants official sites)
- To find out social media websites consumers use to search for information on restaurants (e.g. Facebook, Instagram,Twitter, Food Review Websites, Youtube)

2. To understand consumers perception and attitude toward using social media to search for restaurant in Bangkok

- To determine the key factors that enhance consumer intention to visit the restaurant based on the acquired information (eg. price, location, promotion and offers, variety of choices of menu, qualities of services, quality of taste, atmosphere)
- To determine the key factors in the social media websites that influence consumer intention to visit the restaurant (eg. numbers of likes, numbers of shares, numbers of positive comment, numbers of negative comment, appear in top search results)
- To determine what social media websites that influence consumer

intention to visit the restaurants

- To determine which source of information influence consumer intention to visit the restaurant the most

3.3 Sampling Method

3.3.1 Target population

Population of interest for this study were university students or jobbers, male and female, aged between 18 – 35 years old, living in Bangkok metropolitan area, who have used social media websites to search for information on restaurants in Bangkok in the past 3 months.

3.3.2 Sampling process for in-depth interview

Respondents were recruited through convenience sampling method (non-probability sampling). To ensure that all questionnaires respondents are members of population of interest, screening questions were asked at the beginning, e.g. "Have you used social media to search for information on restaurant in Bangkok in the past 3 months?" and "Do you live in Bangkok?", "Are you aged between 18 to 35 years old." The respondents were different from each other in certain aspects such as age, occupation and attitude aspects to create variety of background. All respondents were given short description about the objectives of the study and the definition of social media and external sources of information before the discussion. The length of discussion lasted approximately 20 minutes (See Appendix A for sample questions of in-depth interview)

3.3.3 Sampling process for questionnaire

The sampling method of questionnaire survey was non-probability sampling method using convenience sampling technique. The 204 questionnaire surveys were distributed offline (30 respondents) and online (173 respondents). At the beginning of offline and online questionnaires, the screening questions were asked to ensure that all questionnaires respondents are members of population of interest. Examples of screening question were "Have you used social media to search for information on restaurant in Bangkok in the past 3 months?" and "Do you live in Bangkok?", "Are you aged between 18 to 35 years (See Appendix B for example of questionnaire).

CHAPTER 4
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Key findings from in-depth interview

First, respondents said that the purposes of using social media in information search for restaurants are varied depending on situations. Respondents said that they often use social media to find restaurants in certain locations, such as location that they are going to visit or restaurants that are nearby their current location etc.; and to look for restaurant choices when have no idea where to eat. While they said that they sometimes use social media to find out more information such as price, menu, location, promotion and offer on specific restaurants that they are interested in; to find restaurants for special occasions such as Valentine's Day, family event, New Year, anniversary, Friday night etc.; and to investigate for brand new restaurants and menus.

Second, respondents said that they normally begin their online search process by using search engine such as Google and Yahoo. This led to question further ask about sources of information in the search results page they would give priority to. They said that they would choose results that appear in the first pages of search results, consumer review in Pantip website, and restaurants official websites.

Third, respondents said that availability of photos of food and atmosphere, and quality of content are key factors that influence their intention to visit the restaurant, followed by source credibility and number of shares of the content respectively.

Fourth, respondents said that key information consumers seek during information search are price, location, promotion variety of choices, qualities of services and food quality. This drew attention to further study about which factors can influence consumers' intention to visit restaurants the most.

Finally, respondents said that they trust information from friends and family the most in term of taste quality while they trust information from restaurant official sites in term of basic information about the restaurants.

4.2 Key finding from questionnaires

4.2.1 Respondents Demographic

Out of 203 respondents, 56 respondents did not pass screening questions. Therefore the sample number of the study are 147 (n=147). From 147 respondents, 67% is female and 33% is male. There are 59.86% of respondents who age between 18 - 29 years old and 40.14% who age 30 and above. 1% of all respondents are high school students or below. 1% holds college degree, 55% hold Bachelor's Degree, and 43% are above the Bachelor's Degree. 65.99% of respondents have income of THB equal or less than 45,000, and 34.01% have income of THB 45,001 and above. From all of the respondents 48% are employee, 21% are students, and 8% are business owners, 4% are government officer, 8% Freelance, 5% are looking for a job/ unemployed, and 6 % are other such as housewife.

4.2.2 Consumer behavior toward using social media to search for restaurants in Bangkok

Results from table 4.1 showed that consumers used social media based on three main purposes as followed; to find out more information on specific restaurants such as price, location, review, promotion & offer (M = 4.29); to find restaurants in certain locations (M = 4.21); and to find restaurants for special occasions (M = 4.16).

Table 4.1: Objective of using social media for restaurant information search

I use social media...	Mean	S.D.
To get ideas for brand new restaurants	3.77	0.87
To find restaurants in certain locations (eg. location that you are going to visit, restaurants that near your location etc.)	4.21	0.82
To look for restaurant choices when have no idea	3.8	1.01
To find restaurants for special occasions (e.g. Valentine, Family Event, NewYear, Anniversary, Friday Night etc.)	4.16	0.83
To find out more information on specific restaurants (e.g. Price, location, review, promotion & offer etc.)	4.29	0.74

Mean score based on 5 points Likert scale: 1 = Strongly disagree and 5 = Strongly agree

From the table 4.2, it showed that people with income of equal or less than 45,000 Baht (n = 97) use social media to find restaurants in certain locations (M = 4.35), to find more information on specific restaurants (M = 4.34); and to find restaurants for special occasions (M = 4.25). While people with income of more than 45,000 Baht (n = 50) use social media to find more information on specific restaurants (M = 4.18) and to find restaurants for special occasions (M = 4).

Moreover, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare consumer's behavior in using social media to find restaurants in certain locations between people with income of equal or less than 45,000 Baht and more than 45,000 Baht. There was a significant difference in the score for people with income of equal or less than 45,000 Baht (M = 4.35, S.D. = 0.66) and people with income of more than 45,000 Baht (M = 3.94, S.D. = 1.02); t = 2.95, p = 0.004. It suggested that people with income of equal or less than 45,000 Baht use social media to find restaurants in certain locations more than people with income of more than 45,000 Baht.

Table 4.2: Objective of using social media by people with different income

| I use social media when… | Income | | | | | |
| | Equal or less than 45000 (n= 97) | | more than 45000 (n = 50) | | | |
	Mean	S. D.	Mean	S.D.	t	P- value
To get ideas for brand new restaurants	3.77	0.82	3.76	0.96	0.087	0.931
To find restaurants in certain locations (eg. location that you are going to visit, restaurants that near your location etc.)	4.35	0.66	3.94	1.02	2.946	0.004
To look for restaurant choices when have no idea	3.94	0.99	3.52	0.99	2.426	0.016
To find restaurants for special occasions (Valentine, Family Event, New Year, Anniversary, Friday Night etc.)	4.25	0.75	4	0.95	1.728	0.086
To find out more information on specific restaurants (price, location, review, promotion & offer etc.)	4.34	0.64	4.18	0.9	1.245	0.215

Mean score based on 5 points Likert scale: 1 = Strongly disagree and 5 = Strongly agree

From table 4.3, the result show that the majority of consumers start their online search process by using search engine (59.18%) and rating and review sites (22.45%) respectively. For those who begin search journey by using search engine (Table 4.4), sources that appear in search results page that consumers would give priority to are rating and reviews sites (59 %) followed by restaurant's official sites (26%).

Table 4.3: How consumers begin online search for information on restaurant

Medium	Count	%
Search Engine	87	59.18
Restaurants Social media	15	10.20
Friend and Family	6	4.08
The Press	6	4.08
Rating and review sites	33	22.45
Total	147	100

Table 4.4: External sources that consumer choose first in search results page

Sources of information	Count	%
Restaurant's official sites	23	26
The Press	7	8
Rating and review sites	52	59
Advertising	1	1
Results appear in the top	5	6
Total	88	100

Social media that are most often used by consumers to search for information on restaurants are Pantip (22.34%), Facebook (21.28%), Wongnai (20.64%) respectively (See table 4.5).

Table 4.5: Social media that are most often used by consumers

Social Media	Count	%
Facebook	100	21.28
Instagram	48	10.21
Twitter	9	1.91
Youtube	5	1.06
Blogs	30	6.38
LINE	8	1.70
Tripadvisor	16	3.40
Openrice	10	2.13
Wongnai	97	20.64
Pantip	105	22.34
BK Magazine	12	2.55
BKKMenu	30	6.38
Tatler	0	0
Total	**470**	**100**

Although both male and female across age group tend to often use same social media websites to search for information. However, the result suggest that female respondents tend to use Instagram more than male respondents (See Table 4.6).

Table 4.6: Social media that are most often used by male and female consumers

	Gender							
	Male (n=48)				Female (n=99)			
	Age				Age			
	18-29 yrs (n=19)		30 and above (n=29)		18-29 yrs (n=69)		30 and above (n=30)	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Facebook	17	29.82	23	22.77	40	18.10	20	21.98
Instagram	2	3.51	7	6.93	30	13.57	9	9.89
Twitter	2	3.51	1	0.99	6	2.71	0	0.00
Youtube	1	1.75	3	2.97	1	0.45	0	0.00
Blogs	6	10.53	9	8.91	9	4.07	6	6.59
LINE	0	0.00	3	2.97	4	1.81	1	1.10
Tripadvisor	1	1.75	4	3.96	8	3.62	3	3.30
Openrice	0	0.00	1	0.99	7	3.17	2	2.20
Wongnai	11	19.30	19	18.81	48	21.72	19	20.88
Pantip	15	26.32	22	21.78	48	21.72	20	21.98
BK Magazine	1	1.75	3	2.97	6	2.71	2	2.20
BKKMenu	1	1.75	6	5.94	14	6.33	9	9.89
Thailand Tatler	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Total	57	100	101	100	221	100	91	100

Key factors that enhance consumer intention to visit the restaurant are taste (18.65%), price (17.65%), and location (14.49%). This applied to both male and female (See Appendix D). Moreover, 37 out of 99 female respondents (8.03%) answered that variety of food can enhance their intention to visit the restaurant, while 9 out of 48 of male respondents (3.81%) answered that variety of food can enhance their intention to visit the restaurant. The result suggested that variety of food can enhance female intention to visit the restaurant more than male (See table 4.7).

Table 4.7: Key factors that enhance consumer intention to visit the restaurant

| | Gender | | | |
| | Male (n=48) | | Female (n=99) | |
	Count	%	Count	%
price	43	18.22	80	17.35
location	33	13.98	68	14.75
promotion	24	10.17	38	8.24
proximity	22	9.32	40	8.68
variety of food	9	3.81	37	8.03
quality of services	20	8.47	36	7.81
taste	45	19.07	85	18.44
rating score	17	7.20	34	7.38
atmosphere	23	9.75	43	9.33
Total	**236**	**100**	**461**	**100**

Table 4.8 showed that keys factors that influence consumer intention to visit the restaurant are availability of photos of food and atmosphere (M = 4.03), credibility of medium and individual who provide the content (M = 3.95), recent update and sufficient information (M = 3.94), numbers of positive and negative comments (M = 3.93), and quality of review (M = 3.71).

Table 4.8: key factors in social media websites that influence consumer intention to visit the restaurant

Key factors in social media websites	Mean	S.D.
Numbers of Likes & Shares	2.64	1.08
Numbers of positive & negative comment	3.93	0.86
Appear in top search results	2.86	1.21
Credibility of the medium & individual who provide the content	3.95	0.72
Recent update and sufficient Information	3.94	0.74
Availability of photos of food & atmosphere	4.03	0.77
Availability of video of food & atmosphere	2.62	1.05
quality of review	3.71	0.91

Mean score based on 5 points Likert scale: 1 = Strongly disagree and 5 = Strongly agree

Table 4.9 showed that social media that influence consumer intention to visit the restaurants are Pantip (M=3.9), Facebook (M=3.58), Wongnai (M=3.29) respectively. These three social media are also chosen as the most often used social media by respondents according to the above findings in table 4.5.

Table 4.9: Influential social media websites

Social media websites	Mean	S.D.
Instagram	2.5	1.28
Twitter	1.55	0.87
Facebook	3.58	0.96
Wongnai	3.29	1.11
Openrice	1.87	1.02
Blogs	2.69	1.23
Pantip	3.9	0.96
Tripadvisor	2.31	1.22
BKKmenu	2.29	1.23
BKmagazine	2.06	1.14
Thailand Tatler	1.66	0.93
Restaurant social media	2.65	1.2
Youtube	2.03	1.06

Mean score based on 5 points Likert scale: 1 = Strongly disagree and 5 = Strongly agree

From table 4.10, the result showed that rating and review sites (M = 4.03) and Friend and Family in social media (M = 4) influence on consumers intention to visit the restaurant the most.

Table 4.10: Influence of sources of information

Sources of information	Mean	S.D.
Friend and family social media	4	0.88
Restaurant social media	3.12	0.93
Advertising	2.44	1.06
The press	2.99	1
Rating and review sites	4.03	0.92

An independent-samples t-test showed that there was a significant difference in the scores for people who eat out less than 3 times a week (M=3.9, S.D.= 0.98) and more than 3 times a weeks (M = 4.25, S.D. = 0.76) in term of the extent that rating and review sites have influence on their intention to visit restaurant; t = -2.26, p = 0.03. The result suggested that rating and review sites have more influence on consumers' intention to visit restaurant among those who eat out more than 3 times a weeks than those who eat equal of less than 3 times a week (Table 4.11).

Table 4.11: Influence of sources of information and number of eating out

| | Avg. number of times eating out per week | | | | | |
| | Equal or less than 3 | | More than 3 | | | |
Source of Information	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	t	P-value
Friend and family	3.9	0.91	4.16	0.82	-1.736	0.085
Restaurant social media	3.06	0.96	3.23	0.87	-1.099	0.274
Advertising	2.42	1.09	2.46	1.02	-0.188	0.851
The press	2.88	1.03	3.18	0.93	-1.778	0.078
Rating and review sites	3.9	0.98	4.25	0.76	-2.257	0.026

Mean score based on 5 points Likert scale: 1 = Strongly disagree and 5 = Strongly agree

An independent-samples t-test showed that the extend that adverting and the press have influence on consumers intention to purchase are significantly different between male (M = 2, S.D. = 0.95 for advertising and M = 2.75, S.D. = 0.96 for the press) and female (M = 2.65, S.D. = 1.05 for advertising and M = 3.11, S.D. = 1 for the press); t = -3.74, p = 0 and t = -2.08, p = 0.04 respectively. The result suggested that advertising and the press are more influential on female intention to visit restaurant compare to male (See table 4.12).

Table 4.12: Influence of sources of information and Gender

	Gender					
	Male (n=48)		**Female (n=99)**			
	Mean	**S. D.**	**Mean**	**S.D.**	**t**	**p-value**
Friend and Family	4.04	0.9	3.98	0.88	0.397	0.692
Restaurant social media	3.06	0.86	3.15	0.96	-0.544	0.587
Advertising	2	0.95	2.65	1.05	-3.744	0
The press	2.75	0.96	3.11	1	-2.084	0.039
Rating and review sites	3.96	0.92	4.07	0.92	-0.695	0.488

Mean score based on 5 points Likert scale: 1 = Strongly disagree and 5 = Strongly agree

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Consumers used social media based on three main purposes as followed; to find out more information on specific restaurants; to find restaurants in certain locations; and to find restaurants for special occasions. Majority of consumers start their online search process by using search engine such as Google and Yahoo. For those people who start their online search process by using search engine, they would give priority to the rating and reviews sites followed by restaurant's official sites that appear in the search results. Moreover, social media that are most often used by consumers to search for information on restaurants are Pantip, Facebook, and Wongnai. This applies to both male and female across age group. Female respondents tend to use Instagram more than male respondents.

Furthermore, after obtaining information from information search process, the key factors that enhance consumer intention to visit the restaurant are taste and price, followed by location. This applies to both male and female. However, food variety can enhance females' intention to visit the restaurant than males. The keys factors in social media websites that influence consumer intention to visit the restaurant are availability of photos, source credibility, sufficient information, numbers of comment, recent update of information and quality of review.

Restaurant rating and review sites and Friends and Family in social media have the greatest impact on customers' intention to visit the restaurant. Influential social media are Pantip, Facebook, Wongnai respectively. Rating and review sites have more influence on intention to visit restaurant among people who eat out more than 3 times a week compared to people who eat out 3 times a week or less. Moreover, the extent that adverting and the press can influence consumers' intention to visit restaurant are significantly different between males and females with females being more impacted.

5.2 Recommendation

    1. Restaurant operators should have their own social media official sites especially Facebook Fanpage as a way to communicate to its target and potential target. They should provide information regarding taste, price and location. It is recommended that they design attractive marketing message for these 3 factors to appeal to the consumers since such factors can enhance customers intention to visit restaurants. From data analysis, for restaurants operators that mainly target female consumers, variety of food can enhance female consumers' intention to visit restaurants. They may consider to add variety of food to the above 3 factors to appeal to female consumers.

    2. Restaurant operators should provide photos of food and atmosphere to allow consumers to have an indirect experience with restaurants prior to their visit, to enhance their intention to visit restaurants. They also should provide sufficient information and quality of review in their social media websites. Moreover, they should always update information in their social media websites; this not only enhance consumers intention to visit restaurant but also can make the content appear in the top search result page which help consumers access to restaurants information easily since consumers start their search process by using search engine.

    3. Restaurant operators may consider promoting their restaurant in restaurant review sites such as Pantip, Wongnai and Facebook; these channels can influence frequent diners. For example they can add their listing in the restaurant review sites such as Wongnai and Openrice. They may also consider purchasing banner ad in review sites or letting review sites write review about the restaurant. Alternatively, they may sponsor review sites to host events at the restaurant to reward sites' top users, so that the top users will write review about the in return. These help restaurants generate more content in review sites that may become useful information for other consumers during information search process.

    4. Restaurant owners should study consumers' perception and attitude towards the credibility of restaurant review sites that they are going to promote their restaurant. Also, they should monitor both positive and negative comments of users in social media sites especially on taste, price, and location, since these factors can influence consumer intention to purchase.

5. Restaurants operators should encourage consumers to share content about the restaurants in consumers' Facebook to influence consumers' friends and family since consumers are more likely to be influenced by friend and family. They should pay attention to the role of friends and family in social media. Restaurant operators may consider using promotional activities to give incentives to consumers in exchange for check-in, like, upload photos on Facebook as well as on other restaurant official sites such as Instagram.

6. For restaurants operators that mainly target female consumers, apart from using rating and review sites and their own official social media websites to promote restaurants, they may consider using adverting and the press to influence consumers' intention to visit restaurant. For example, they may consider using advertising in Facebook with attractive marketing message on taste, price, and location, as well as variety of menu.

5.3 Limitation of Study

1. The sampling method for this study was based on non-probability samples due to the definite number of population is not known.

2. Due to time constraint, this research was conducted with 147 respondents, aged between 18 - 35 years old, living in Bangkok area, who have used social media to search for information about restaurants within the past 3 months. Thus the sample size cannot be a representative of the whole population of users who use social media to search for information on restaurant.

3. Due to time constraint, this study mainly focused on the information search process prior to visiting restaurants. However, consumers' decision making process is very complex. Restaurant operators should further study on other factors that are involved in consumers' decision making process when they want to design effective marketing communication.

4. This study only focused on restaurant industry; further research and study need to be done to be able apply to other industries.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
SAMPLE QUESTION OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW

1. On average, how much time per day do you spend on using social media?

2. On average, how often per week do you search for information for restaurants through online channel

3. What is the purpose of using social media to search for information for restaurants?

4. Generally, how do you begin your online search for information on restaurants?

5. When you search for online information on restaurants, what social media websites that you often use?

6. What are key selection criteria that influence your intention to visit the restaurant? (Price, location, promotion and offers, proximity, variety of choices taste etc.)

7. What factors in the social media that influence your intention to visit the restaurant? (Numbers of Likes, number of shares, positive comment, negative comments, photo etc.)

8. What social media will have an influence on your intention to visit the restaurant?

9. What do you about the information from personal sources such as friends and family

10. What do you about the information from commercial sources such as restaurant official sites and Advertising

11. What do you about the information from public sources such as the press, consumer rating websites, and bloggers

12. Among the three sources, what sources of information do you trust information the most?

APPENDIX B
SAMPLE QUESTIONS OF QUESTIONAIRE

This questionnaire survey is a part of Individual Study, MIM, Thammasat University. The objective of this research is to study about consumer's behavior and attitude towards using social media to search for information on restaurant in Bangkok. All information provided by respondents is for the academic purpose only. All information provided will be kept strictly confidential and would not be used for any commercial purposes.

Definition

Social media are Internet-based applications that allow consumers to generate and share content such as texts, pictures, and video clips with other consumers in virtual communities and networks. The study mainly focus on Blogs; Content communities such as Youtube; and Social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.

Part I: Screening Questions

1. Do you live in Bangkok?

( )   Yes   ( )   No

2. Is your age between 18 and 35 years old?

( )   Yes   ( )   No

3 Have you used social media to search for any information in the past 3 months?

( )   Yes   ( )   No

4 Have you been to restaurants in the past 3 months?

( )   Yes   ( )   No

5 Have you used social media to search for information on restaurant in the past 3 months?

( )   Yes   ( )   No

Part A: Consumers' Behavior toward using social media to search for information on restaurants

A1. On average, how much time per day do you spend on using social media?

( ) less than 1 hours per day ( ) 1-3 hours per day ( ) More than 3 hours per day

A2. Generally, how do you begin your online search for information on restaurants? (Choose one only)

(   ) Via search engine such as google, Yahoo etc. (Go to Question A3)

(   ) Direct access to the restaurant's official website, Facebook Fanpage, Instagram etc. (Go to Question A4)

(   ) Explore from Friend and family in social media such as Line, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter etc. (Go to Question A4)

( ) Visit the Press such as BK Magazine online, BKKmenu.com, Thailand Tatler Magazine online and Food column in online newspaper etc. (Go to Question A4)

( ) Visit restaurants rating and review sites by consumers such as Tripdavisor, Wongnai, Openrice, Pantip, blogs (weblog, Facebook Fanpage, Instagram) etc. (Go to Question A4)

A3. **If you use search engine** to find information for restaurants, which sources of information in the search results page would you choose first? (Choose one only)

( ) Restaurant's official website, Facebook Fanpage, Instagram etc.

( ) The Press such as BK Magazine online, BKKmenu.com, Thailand Tatler Magazine online and Food column in online newspaper etc.

( ) restaurants rating and review sites by consumers such as Tripdavisor, Wongnai, Openrice, Pantip, blogs (weblog, Facebook Fanpage, Instagram etc.)

( ) Advertising (Google Adwords, Banner)

( ) Results that appear in the first pages of search results, regardless of sources.

( ) Other, please specify……

A4. When you search for online information on restaurants, what social media websites that you often use? (Can choose NO more than5)

( ) Facebook   ( ) Instagram   ( ) Twitter   ( ) Youtube

( ) Blogs   ( ) LINE   ( ) Tripdavisor ( ) Wongnai

( ) Openrice ( ) Pantip ( ) Blogs ( ) BK Magazine online

(   ) BKKmenu.com (   ) Thailand Tatler Magazine online (   ) Other, please specify.....................

A5. How much do you agree with the following? (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 =Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly agree)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I use social media to search for information on restaurant when…					
To get ideas for brand new restaurants					
To find restaurants in certain locations (eg. location that you are going to visit, restaurants that near your location etc.)					
To look for restaurant choices when have no idea what/where to eat					
To find restaurants for special occasions (Valentine, Family Event, NewYear, Anniversary, Friday Night etc.)					
To find out more information on specific restaurants (price, location, review, promotion & offer etc.)					
Other, please specify.........					

Part B: Consumers' perception & attitude toward using social media to find information on restaurants

B1. What are key selection criteria that influence your intention to visit the restaurant?
(Can choose more than one)

( ) price   ( ) location   ( ) promotion and offers   ( ) proximity

( ) variety of choices   ( ) qualities of services   ( ) quality of taste

( ) review's rating ( ) atmosphere ( ) other, please specify.................................

B2.What factors in the social media that influence your intention to visit the restaurant? (Please rank from 1 to 5 where 1 = Not at all influential, 2 = Slightly influential, 3= Somewhat influential, 4 = Very influential, and 5 = Extremely influential)

	Not at all Influential	Slightly Influential	Somewhat Influential	Very Influential	Extremely Influential
Numbers of Likes					
Numbers of Shares					
Number of Positive Comment					
Number of Negative Comment					
Appear in top search results page					
Credibility of the medium					
Credibility of Individual who provide the content					
Recency of Information Updates					
Sufficient Information					
Availability of photos					
Availability of video					
Quality of the review (text, photo, video)					
Other, please specify......					

B3. What social media will have an influence on your intention to visit the restaurant?
(1 = Not at all influential, 2 = Slightly influential, 3= Somewhat influential,
4 = Very influential, and 5 = Extremely influential)

	Not at all influential	Slightly influential	Somewhat influential	Very influential	Extremely influential
Instagram					
Twitter					
Facebook					
Wongnai					
Openrice					
Blogs					
Pantip					
Tripdavisor					
BKKmenu.com					
BK Magazine online					
Thailand Tatler Magazine online					
Restaurant official websites					
Youtube					
Other, Please specify,………					

B4. What sources of information will have an influence on your intention to visit the restaurant? (Please rank from 1 to 5 where 1 = Not at all influential, 2 = Slightly influential, 3= Somewhat influential, 4 = Very influential, and 5 = Extremely influential)

	Not at all influential	Slightly influential	Somewhat influential	Very influential	Extremely influential
Friends & Family					
Restaurant official sites					
Advertising (Banner , Google Adwords etc.)					
The press (eg. BKmenu, BKKMagazine online, Thailand Tatler Online)					
Consumer review (Tripadvisor, Wongnai, Openrice, blogs, Pantip)					
Other, Please specify…..					

Part C: General Information

C1. How old are you?

( ) Below 18 years old   ( ) 18 - 23 years old   ( ) 24 - 29 years old

( ) 30 - 35 years old   ( ) Above 35 years old

C2. Gender

( ) Male   ( ) Female

C3. Education Level

( ) High School   ( ) Bachelor Degree   ( ) Master Degree   ( )   Other, please specify...........

C4. Occupation

( ) Student   ( ) Government Officer   ( ) Employee ( ) Business owner / Self Employed

( ) Freelance   ( ) Looking for a job/ unemployed   ( ) Other, please specify: ………..

C5. Income per month

( ) 15,000 Baht and below ( ) 15,001 Baht - 20,000 Baht

( ) 20,001 Baht – 25,000 Baht( ) 25,001 Baht – 30,000 Baht ( ) 30,001 Baht and above

Appendix C

Key factors that enhance consumer intention to visit the restaurant

Key Factors	Count	%
price	123	17.65
location	101	14.49
promotion	62	8.90
proximity	62	8.90
variety of food	46	6.60
quality of services	56	8.03
taste	130	18.65
rating score	51	7.32
atmostphere	66	9.47
Total	**697**	**100**

BIOGRAPHY

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