

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN SHAPING THE ADOPTION OF SATELLITE TECHNOLOGY IN THAILAND

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Received 19 April 2024

Revised 29 July 2024

Accepted 9 August 2024

Abstract

This research explores the impact of social media platforms—namely Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram—on the adoption of satellite technology within urban Thailand. The study aims to delineate the ways in which these digital platforms influence public perceptions and decision-making processes related to the utilization of satellite technology in urban environments. Employing a qualitative methodology, the research involved conducting in-depth interviews with eight key informants who were selected through purposive sampling to gain diverse and relevant perspectives. These informants included stakeholders from both the technology sector and active social media users who are knowledgeable about satellite technology. Content analysis was utilized as the main analytical technique to systematically examine the interview data, enabling a thorough exploration of how information dissemination through social media impacts technology adoption. The findings from this study highlight the crucial role that social media plays as a catalyst in the technological shift towards satellite internet in urban Thailand. The results indicate that strategic use of these platforms not only accelerates the adoption rates but also significantly deepens consumer engagement with new technologies. This study underscores the importance of integrating targeted social media strategies in promotional activities to effectively reach and influence urban populations, thereby facilitating a smoother transition to advanced satellite internet services.

Keywords: Social Media, Influence, Satellite Technology, Adoption

Introduction

In the contemporary digital era, technology undergoes rapid evolution, enhancing convenience across various life domains. This dynamic has ushered in a new phase of globalization, marked by substantial progress in information and communication technologies (ICTs), the Internet, and mobile communications. Leading this advancement are computers and nascent ICTs, which facilitate global connectivity and foster the establishment of an integrated communication system that merges financial and informational spheres on a worldwide scale (Jorgenson & Vu, 2016; Limna et al., 2023). The Internet, now a pivotal element of daily existence, represents the most swiftly adopted technological innovation in human history, transforming sectors including information retrieval, media, entertainment, and social networking (Firth et al., 2019). Satellite internet technology in Thailand plays a crucial role in enhancing connectivity, particularly in remote and rural areas where traditional broadband infrastructure is challenging to implement. Providers like Thaicom have launched multiple satellites, offering broadband, broadcasting, and communication services. While SpaceX's Starlink is exploring expansion into Thailand, it awaits regulatory approval to increase its operational scope. The Thai government supports these initiatives as part of its Thailand 4.0 strategy, aiming to foster digital inclusivity and transform the economy through technological advancements. Challenges such as the regulatory landscape, geographical barriers, and the cost of services need addressing to ensure broad and equitable access. However, the future of satellite internet in Thailand appears promising, with potential for significant contributions to national connectivity and development (DEPA, n.d., Oottamakorn et al., 2019; Tortermvasana, 2024).

In urban settings, internet satellite technology offers both challenges and opportunities. It can serve as a reliable backup for traditional broadband, enhance competitive pricing, and support smart city initiatives by connecting Internet of Things (IoT) devices for urban management. However, urban deployment faces hurdles like signal interference from high-rise buildings, the difficulty of competing with established broadband services, and regulatory constraints on equipment installation. Despite these challenges, advancements in satellite technology, such as the development of low Earth orbit (LEO) networks by companies like SpaceX's Starlink, are promising higher speeds and lower latency. These improvements could make satellite internet a viable alternative in urban areas, not only enhancing connectivity options but also contributing to the resilience and technological diversity of urban infrastructures (Centenaro et al., 2021; Homssi et al., 2022; Shaengchart & Kraiwant, 2024).

According to OOSGA (2023), social media has become a pivotal component within the Thai market landscape, exerting a significant influence on consumer decision-making processes, especially in the apparel and footwear sectors. Several social media platforms are particularly influential, serving as primary channels through which the younger demographic

engages in product research and comparison prior to making purchases. This trend underscores the evolving patterns of consumer behavior, where digital platforms are increasingly utilized as tools for informed decision-making, reflecting a broader shift towards online consumption and interaction. Furthermore, social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram have transformed how information is shared and consumed globally. Each platform offers unique features that cater to different content formats and audience engagement strategies. Facebook's widespread use in Thailand makes it a powerful tool for reaching a broad audience. It allows for detailed discussions, sharing of news articles, and the creation of community groups focused on technology and innovation. The interactive nature of Facebook also facilitates feedback and engagement from users, providing a real-time gauge of public sentiment towards satellite technology. Organizations and government entities can use Facebook to conduct live sessions, share success stories, and address public concerns, thus enhancing transparency and trust. YouTube serves as a critical educational platform. Its capability to deliver visually engaging content makes it ideal for explaining complex technologies like satellite systems. Tutorials, documentaries, and expert interviews can be broadcasted to explain the benefits, functionalities, and applications of satellite technology. This platform is particularly effective in demonstrating real-world applications and success stories, potentially reducing apprehensions about new technological adoptions. Instagram, with its visually-centric content, is adept at capturing the attention of younger demographics. It can be used to visually showcase the benefits and possibilities of satellite technology through infographics, short videos, and stories. Instagram's features like stories, reels, and posts allow for creative presentations that can simplify technical information and make it more accessible and engaging. It also provides a platform for influencers in technology and education sectors to share content related to satellite technology, further influencing public perception and interest (Macarthy, 2018; Manzoor et al., 2020; Pavelle & Wilkinson, 2020).

In recent years, digital technology, particularly social media, has increasingly been recognized as a pivotal facilitator of knowledge dissemination. It is progressively being embraced by organizational stakeholders as the primary medium for social interactions. Numerous organizations have leveraged social media platforms in the past few years to foster significant opportunities for knowledge exchange among stakeholders. This mode of knowledge sharing is instrumental in transcending spatial and temporal barriers, enabling the creation of multimedia content, and offering user-friendly interfaces that facilitate engagement even among non-specialists (Yaqub & Alsabban, 2023). The escalating integration of digital technologies, notably social media, has transformed the dynamics of consumer knowledge exchange regarding products and services. Baima et al. (2022) conducted research to identify the factors that motivate consumers to share knowledge about products and services on social media platforms. The findings of this investigation indicate that variables such as the

usage frequency of online reviews, social bonds, subjective happiness, and reciprocity exert a positive influence on customer knowledge sharing. Conversely, the perceived usefulness of online reviews, the inclination to assist others, customer susceptibility to interpersonal influence, and informational motives appear to have no significant effect on customer knowledge sharing. Furthermore, Treem and Leonardi (2013) observe that the rapid expansion of social media technologies, such as blogs, wikis, social networking sites, social tagging, and microblogging, particularly within organizational settings. Managers in these contexts anticipate that these digital tools will significantly enhance essential organizational processes. Furthermore, social media technologies profoundly influence organizational communication processes by enabling behaviors that were previously challenging or impossible before their introduction into workplace environments. An analysis of existing research on social media use within organizations identifies four relatively consistent affordances these technologies provide: visibility, persistence, editability, and association. Activating a combination of these affordances could have a substantial impact on numerous processes central to the studies of organizational communication scholars.

In urban Thailand, the intersection of social media and satellite technology adoption presents a compelling area of study. As urban populations increasingly turn to digital platforms for information and communication, the role of social media in influencing technology adoption behaviors becomes pivotal. This exploration seeks to understand how social media channels are utilized to promote, discuss, and disseminate information about satellite technology, potentially accelerating its acceptance and integration into daily life. By examining the dynamics between social media trends and technology adoption in urban Thai contexts, we can gain insights into the broader implications for digital communication strategies and infrastructure development in the region.

Research objective

This research aims to explore the role of social media, namely Facebook, Youtube, and Instagram, in shaping the adoption of satellite technology in urban Thailand. This study seeks to understand how social media influences public perception and decision-making processes regarding the utilization of satellite technology, particularly in urban areas. By examining the interactions, communications, and content disseminated across various social media platforms, the research aims to elucidate the mechanisms through which social media can accelerate or impede technological adoption.

Methodology

This research embraced a qualitative methodology as its foundational framework, prioritizing in-depth interviews—a cornerstone of qualitative inquiry. The primary objective of

this approach is to uncover the intricate motivations and rationales underlying specific behaviors and decisions, by thoroughly examining the contexts within which individuals or groups operate. In-depth interviews are particularly adept at eliciting detailed insights on specialized topics, thus delivering precise information that is directly relevant to the research objectives. These interviews enable a thorough exploration of the subject matter, facilitating a nuanced comprehension that might elude quantitative methodologies (Rutledge & Hogg, 2020; Siripipatthanakul et al., 2022; Kraiwanit et al., 2023). The nature of in-depth interviews allows for flexibility in probing unexpected themes or ideas that may emerge during conversations with participants. This method enables a thorough exploration of participants' motivations, rationales, and decision-making processes regarding satellite technology adoption. Additionally, this study incorporated the documentary method as an auxiliary approach to strengthen the primary data collection efforts. This involved an exhaustive review of secondary data, which played a crucial role in shaping the development of relevant survey questions. The integration of primary data from in-depth interviews with the secondary data assessed through the documentary method laid a solid groundwork for achieving comprehensive and accurate research findings.

A purposive sampling strategy was utilized for participant selection, following the research by Klayklung et al. (2023) and Limna (2023). This technique, common in qualitative research, involves the intentional selection of participants who possess specific knowledge or experience pertinent to the research topic, as identified by the researcher's expertise. This method aims to gain a deep understanding of a particular phenomenon or demographic group (Shaheen et al., 2019). The sample comprised eight informants. Participants were selected for their in-depth knowledge of satellite technology. This included stakeholders from the technology sector who have a professional background in satellite systems, as well as active social media users who engage with or discuss satellite technology regularly. Moreover, the selection included individuals actively involved in or knowledgeable about satellite technology through their professional roles or social media activities. This ensures that the participants are up-to-date with current trends and developments in the field. In addition, all participants were adults aged 18 and above, which aligns with the study's focus on mature perspectives. Additionally, all participants were residents of Thailand, ensuring that the insights gathered are specific to the local context and reflect the experiences of individuals within the country. The sample included a mix of stakeholders from different sectors within the technology field and varied levels of engagement with satellite technology. This diversity in the sample aimed to provide a comprehensive view of the topic, capturing a range of opinions and experiences.

Content analysis facilitates the systematic and objective identification and quantification of various phenomena. This technique allows researchers to draw valid

conclusions from data, whether it is verbal, visual, or textual (Asanprakit & Limna, 2023; Phuangsuwan et al., 2024; Limna et al., 2024). Thus, content analysis was employed for analyzing the qualitative data. This method was vital for interpreting the complex verbal responses of the participants, thus enabling a thorough understanding of the research topic. Furthermore, to improve data management and analysis, a word frequency analysis was carried out, which visualized the most frequently occurring words in order to pinpoint key themes and concepts. This multi-faceted approach ensures a rigorous exploration of the research topic, yielding rich, nuanced insights into the interplay between social media dynamics and technology adoption processes. The chosen methodology aligns with the study's objectives, enabling a comprehensive examination of the complex socio-technological landscape in Thailand.

Results

The investigation into the role of social media in shaping the adoption of satellite technology in urban Thailand has yielded insightful results. The study found that social media platforms significantly influence urban consumers' awareness and perceptions of satellite technology. Specifically, platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram serve as popular channels for information dissemination, where users frequently share experiences and insights about satellite internet services. In addition, engagement metrics on social media—such as likes, shares, and comments—correlate with increased interest and curiosity about satellite technology, suggesting that interactive content may play a crucial role in converting interest into adoption. These social media activities have been crucial in demystifying satellite technology for urban dwellers, thereby enhancing their receptiveness and reducing the perceived complexity associated with its adoption. Furthermore, targeted advertising campaigns on social media have effectively reached a broad audience, providing tailored content that addresses specific concerns and questions about satellite technology. These campaigns have not only increased knowledge but also fostered a sense of community among users, which has further propelled the interest and acceptance of satellite technology in urban areas.

“Satellite technology has come a long way, and internet speeds are constantly improving. This allows urban residents to enjoy faster downloads, smoother streaming, and better online gaming experiences. Social media platforms are playing a key role in driving the adoption of satellite technology. These platforms serve as hubs for information sharing, user reviews, and discussions about satellite internet” (Respondent 1, April 9, 2024).

“Social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram have become crucial channels for spreading awareness and shaping perceptions about satellite internet. People are actively sharing their experiences and insights on these platforms, creating a space for open discussion and knowledge exchange” (Respondent 2, April 9, 2024).

“Engagement is key. We found a correlation between metrics like likes, shares, and comments, and increased interest in satellite technology. Interactive content, like user testimonials and Q&A sessions, seems to be particularly effective. These activities help demystify the technology for urban dwellers, making it seem less complex and more approachable” (Respondent 3, April 9, 2024).

“Social media allows for targeted advertising campaigns that address specific concerns and questions. This not only increases knowledge but also fosters a sense of community among users who can connect and share tips” (Respondent 4, April 9, 2024).

“Traditionally, satellite technology might have seemed complex or inaccessible for city folks. But social media is breaking down those barriers. People see others using it, share tips and tricks, and that makes it seem more approachable” (Respondent 5, April 10, 2024).

“Social media platforms can further enhance the adoption of satellite technology by bridging the digital divide. Partnering with local organizations to offer digital literacy workshops and troubleshooting guides specifically tailored to Thai audiences” (Respondent 6, April 10, 2024).

“Targeted ads are a powerful tool. They allow companies to reach specific demographics and address their unique concerns about satellite internet. This personalized approach not only increases overall knowledge but also fosters a sense of community among users. Seeing others with similar needs and interests adopting the technology creates a sense of trust and encourages broader acceptance” (Respondent 7, April 10, 2024).

“With ongoing advancements, satellite technology is poised to play an even bigger role in the lives of urban Thais. As social media continues to be a driving force for information and community building, we can expect even wider adoption and a more

seamless integration of satellite technology into the urban landscape" (Respondent 8, April 10, 2024).

To augment the comprehension of the findings, a frequency analysis of words was performed. The terms most recurrently cited by participants during the interviews were visually represented in a word cloud, as depicted in Figure 1.



Figure 1 Word Cloud (Source: Authors)

Overall, the results underscore the vital role of social media as a catalyst in the technological shift towards satellite internet in urban Thailand, suggesting that strategic use of these platforms can accelerate adoption rates and deepen consumer engagement with new technologies.

Discussions

The findings from this investigation into the impact of social media on the adoption of satellite technology in urban Thailand reveal a significant relationship between social media engagement and consumer behavior. Social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram have emerged as key facilitators, serving not just as platforms for social interaction but as crucial conduits for information dissemination regarding satellite technology. The frequent sharing of user experiences and insights on these platforms has played a pivotal role in shaping urban consumers' awareness and perceptions. In line with Latifah et al. (2022), it is confirmed that social media networking and knowledge sharing significantly enhance innovation performance. Yaqub and Alsabban (2023) also confirmed that the use of social media platforms significantly enhances knowledge sharing, and that the effectiveness of social

media platforms in advancing knowledge sharing intensifies with an increase in both the motivation to share knowledge and the motivation to use social media.

The correlation between engagement metrics (likes, shares, and comments) and increased interest in satellite technology underscores the importance of interactive content. This type of content not only engages but also educates the audience, making it a powerful tool in converting interest into actual adoption. Furthermore, the role of social media in demystifying satellite technology cannot be overstated. By simplifying complex information and making it more accessible, social media has reduced the perceived barriers to adoption, such as technological complexity and unfamiliarity. Rahman et al. (2017) indicated a significant relationship between fan page engagement and purchase intention. Li et al. (2023) revealed that higher engagement metrics lead to increased consumer trust and subsequently higher purchase intentions only when the source expertise is high.

In urban areas of Thailand, social media serves as a potent mechanism for advancing the adoption of satellite technology. Through strategic utilization of social media for information dissemination, public engagement, and market analysis, stakeholders can significantly enhance public intention to embrace this technology, thereby harnessing its substantial potential for development and innovation.

Conclusion

The strategic use of targeted advertising campaigns on social media platforms, such as Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram, has also been instrumental. These campaigns have succeeded in reaching a broad audience with tailored content that addresses specific concerns and questions about satellite technology. More importantly, these efforts have fostered a community among users, which has been crucial in propelling interest and acceptance of satellite technology in urban areas. In conclusion, this study highlights the vital role of social media as a catalyst in the technological shift towards satellite internet in urban Thailand. The implications of these findings suggest that other urban regions looking to enhance technology adoption can benefit from a similar strategic use of social media platforms. By fostering an informed and engaged community, urban centers can accelerate the adoption rates and deepen consumer engagement with new technologies, ultimately leading to a more connected and technologically advanced urban landscape.

Practical and policy recommendations

To effectively promote the adoption of satellite technology in urban areas, several practical and policy recommendations are proposed. Practically, it is crucial to develop interactive content such as live demonstrations and webinars to engage users actively, and to leverage partnerships with technology influencers to enhance credibility and reach.

Additionally, optimizing content for social media algorithms will ensure targeted reach, and implementing feedback mechanisms will allow for real-time consumer insights. On the policy side, governments should facilitate technological expansion by easing satellite operation regulations and incentivizing infrastructure investment. Promoting educational campaigns and digital literacy programs will also increase public understanding and usability of satellite technology. Encouraging public-private partnerships can further support these initiatives, ensuring alignment with urban development goals. These strategies will not only advance the integration of satellite technology in urban Thailand but also set a benchmark for similar technological adoptions globally.

Limitations and recommendations for future studies

This study, while providing valuable insights into the role of social media in the adoption of satellite technology in urban Thailand, is not without its limitations. First, the sample size of eight key informants, although purposively selected to offer diverse perspectives, may not fully capture the wide range of opinions and experiences across the urban population. Additionally, the focus on only three social media platforms—Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram—may overlook the influence of other emerging or less mainstream platforms that could also impact technology adoption behaviors. Moreover, the qualitative nature of this study limits the generalizability of the findings. The subjective interpretations inherent in content analysis and the potential for bias in informant selection and response interpretation must also be acknowledged. Future research could address these limitations by expanding the sample size and including a broader demographic to enhance the representativeness and depth of data. It would also be beneficial to examine a wider array of social media platforms, especially newer or niche ones, to get a comprehensive view of the digital landscape's impact on technological adoption. Quantitative methods could be employed alongside qualitative ones to provide a broader statistical foundation for the findings, allowing for more generalized conclusions. Additionally, longitudinal studies could explore how changes in social media engagement correlate with long-term adoption rates of satellite technology. Finally, future research should include comparative analysis across multiple regions to uncover distinct and common trends, providing deeper insights and enabling more targeted strategies for satellite technology adoption.

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