

# Small but Smart: Qualitative Content Analysis of Successful Thai Small and Medium Enterprises' Brand Communication on Social Media

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## Abstract

**A**iming to explore effective social media message strategies for small and medium enterprises' (SMEs) brand communication, a qualitative content analysis was conducted to enrich each strategy's details and expand the horizon of social media content analysis mostly used the quantitative methodology. Thematically analyzed, all 3,147 Facebook posts during 2015-2017 of eight awarded Thai SMEs yielded 19 subcategories of content strategies reflecting three SMEs' brand communication practices: presenting brand identity; practicing brand-related marketing activities; plus leveraging secondary associations.

**Keywords:** Brand communication, Social media, Small and Medium Enterprises, Qualitative content analysis, Thailand

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## Introduction

Nowadays over 90% of businesses around the world are small and medium enterprises (SMEs) (World Trade Organization [WTO], 2016). Therefore, it is not surprising that SMEs are the backbone of the economy in Thailand (Suntivong, 2014) as well as in many countries, for instance, 99.7% of all employers in the U.S. are small firms (Altman & Sabato, 2007). For the realization of SMEs' competence in generating income, scholars gradually develop their interest in the enhancement of small and medium firms' capacity. Therefore, branding, due to its substantial contribution to SMEs' sustainability (Krake, 2005; Suntivong, 2014), becomes one of the research topics growing in importance in the area of SMEs (Spence & Essoussi, 2010).

Among the issues on branding within the SME context, brand communication or the process of conveying brand identity to customers (Renton, Daellenbach, Davenport, & Richard, 2015) has received a considerable amount of attention from researchers. Existing studies mostly focus on SME brand communication activities (Centeno & Hart, 2012; Coviello, Brodie, & Munro, 2000) and channels (Nimsuwan & Polnigongit, 2013; Opoku, Abratt, Bendixen, & Pitt, 2007). These works similarly noted that SMEs often struggled to make the most of their constraint budget by practicing low-cost brand communication activities like product demonstration and trade show (Centeno & Hart, 2012) as well as utilizing mainly online and social media (Nakara, Benmoussa, & Jaouen, 2012). In particular, Facebook was suggested to be an appropriate social media site for SMEs because it uniquely enables SME brands to advertise with low budgets to increase future customers and also offers a channel to maintain the relationship with current clients (Nobre & Silva, 2014). These advantages of Facebook might be the reasons why numbers of local business Facebook pages are climbing to more than 65 million today (Facebook, 2017).

Obviously, the question today is not so much a question of "if" but "how" to use Facebook as a channel for SME brand communication. However, the studies regarding brand communication strategy for Facebook brand pages were mostly carried out within the environment of top brands. The results obtained, however, might have little practical use for SME brands whose branding practice are, due to their unique characteristics and limited resources, significantly different from that of big brands (Krake, 2005; Wong & Merrilees, 2007). Moreover, previous studies usually adopted the quantitative content analysis, whose coding frames instantly derived from the existing literature (Schreier, 2012), to investigate the message strategies used for brand communication on the global firms' Facebook pages (Ashley & Tuten, 2014; Shen & Bissell, 2013). Their findings, therefore, might provide the classification emphasizing mainly on the frequency of content strategies with insufficient details for SMEs to adopt as a guideline for their practice of brand communication.

To fulfill the need for social media content strategies for SME brand communication, we choose to set foot on Facebook pages of Thai SMEs to unveil their message strategies written in the local language to provide the overview of Thai SMEs' brand communication for the future cross-cultural research, and for international entrepreneurs who plan to expand their businesses into Thai market as well. Moreover, this study intends to capture the unique aspects of SME brand communication. Hence, a set of data-driven subcategories, according to the qualitative content analysis approach (Schreier, 2012), were developed to gain rich and specific information regarding what and how SME brands should post on their official Facebook pages to effectively communicate their brand uniqueness to target consumers? Later, these issues were sorted into the main categories derived from branding literature (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2013) to link SMEs' Facebook content strategies to the realm of brand communication

theory. Consequently, four research questions for this paper are:

RQ1: What are social media content strategies for SME brand communication?

RQ2: Do SME brands present brand identity through their social media content strategies? If so, how?

RQ3: Do SME brands practice brand-related marketing activities through their social media content strategies? If so, how?

RQ4: Do SME brands leveraging second associations through their social media content strategies? If so, how?

To investigate these research questions, we first present the theoretical overview of social media content analysis and brand communication strategy. The research method is then explained, followed by the analysis of results. The paper ends with the discussion and the implications of study findings for practitioners and researchers.

## Theoretical Background

### Social Media Content Analysis of SME Brands

Despite the popularity of social media usage among SME brands, there is obviously a lack of study on the analysis of social media content for brand communication strategy within the context of SMEs. Contents on other kinds of online media such as SME brands' websites were analyzed to find brand communication techniques (Opoku et al., 2007) while studies regarding social media content analysis within the SME setting tended to focus more on marketing communication tactics than on brand communication strategies. Csordas and Gati (2014) analyzed the content of small and medium restaurants' Facebook brand pages to suggest the message strategies for marketing communication purposes. The information was broadly categorized based on the message function into two main types including informative and entertaining content. These groups of messages were focused on how they could generate buzz and seize the customers' attention

but not on how they could express the brand identity.

The studies regarding brand communication strategy for Facebook brand pages were mostly carried out within the environment of top brands. Ashley and Tuten (2014) selected the best 100 brands listed in Interbrand's Best Global Brands valuation to study the creative strategies and appeals being used on their Facebook pages. The findings revealed three major kinds of the content which were sales promotions, user-generated content, and message strategies such as emotional appeal, unique selling proposition, and spokesperson. Although these content strategies tapped on some concepts of branding, still they were not directly linked to the practice of brand communication. In a congruent manner, Shen and Bissell (2013) investigated how big beauty brands employ social media, particularly Facebook, to increase brand awareness and reinforce brand loyalty. Posts were grouped into five types including event, product, promotion, entertainment and other. Numbers of like and comment of each message type were compared to find the most effective strategy for creating brand awareness and brand loyalty. However, brand identity was not focused, possibly because consumers have already known well the uniqueness of giant cosmetic companies used in the study. Small and medium brands which are usually less famous, in contrast, are in urgent need of the communication guideline to express their brand identity.

Another point worth mentioning is that quantitative content analysis was used in most studies (Ashley & Tuten, 2014; Shen & Bissell, 2013). This method is less descriptive than the qualitative one (Schreier, 2012), and might not suitable for SMEs searching for brand communication content strategies. This study, therefore, fulfilled research gaps above by adopting the qualitative content analysis to gain rich information on what and how SME brands should post on their official Facebook pages to effectively communicate their brand identity to target consumers.

## Brand Communication Strategy

Brand communication was defined as the combination of all communication activities practiced by a brand to convey its brand identity to the target audiences (Renton, Daellenbach, Davenport, & Richard, 2015) in the way that achieves the consistency in consumers' brand perception (Moriarty et al., 2015).

The literature on branding suggested several strategies for brand communication practices. First and foremost, brand identity, as mentioned above, is essential to brand communication, especially within the setting of small and medium brands which are usually low in brand awareness (Aaker, 1996). For SME brands, their identity stemmed from personalities of the firm owners, new and high-quality products, brand symbols (brand name, logo, and color), and minimal-controlled organization cultures (Centeno, Hart, & Dinnie, 2013). These four types of SME brand identity are congruent with the branding literature. Specifically, brand identity or the distinctiveness of the brand (Upshaw, 1995) can be created by positioning a brand with a unique value, in consumers' minds, relative to competing brands (Batra, Myers, & Aaker, 1996). The distinct position of a brand can be expressed by presenting points of difference (POD) or the satisfactory brand attributes varying from those of competitors. Meanwhile, a brand should possess the qualities essential for all the brands in the same product category defined as points of parity (POP) (Keller, 2013).

Besides presenting the distinct brand position, a brand can craft its own personality to differentiate it from others in the market (Upshaw, 1995). Brand personality, therefore, is another source of brand identity. Sets of human characteristics, for instance, gender, age, social status, and traits can be associated with a brand to show its uniqueness (Aaker, 1996).

Apart from the brand identity, Keller (2013) stated the importance of the integration of the

brand into market activities such as implementing the brand-oriented the strategies regarding the product, pricing, and distribution channel, since this is the effective brand communication that can lead to brand equity in consumers' perception.

Lastly, some SMEs broaden the brand with secondary associations. Odoom's (2016) finding indicated that SME brands were often linked to other entities such as famous people or the country of origin to gain more credibility and equity in the eyes of customers.

This study, therefore, adopted all key points of brand communication reviewed here to be the theoretical framework to analyze for the brand communication strategies appearing in the SME brands' social media content.

## Method

For answering the research questions, this study utilized the qualitative content analysis (QCA) to obtain social media content strategies for SME brand communication (RQ1). The qualitative method was adopted here as it is appropriate for analyzing SME brands' Facebook posts which might need some degree of interpretation to assign the meaning (Bernard, 2013). Moreover, QCA's coding frames are always partly data-driven (Schreier, 2012), so this method is a useful tool for this study to discover and capture the specific brand communication strategies practiced by successful SMEs.

The sample here contained 3,147 Facebook posts captured from official brand pages of eight SMEs or businesses having 50-200 staffs and fixed assets of THB50-200 million (Office of SMEs Promotion [OSMEP], 2011) and receiving the national SME brand award from 2009 to 2016 (See Table 1). For the stability and the richness of the data coded by two independent researchers, we collected the last three-year Facebook posts of the eight awarded brands from January 2015 to December 2017.

The coding frame was later built according to the qualitative content analysis approach (Schreier,

2012). Here we developed the coding frame by combining concept-driven and data-driven strategies. In particular, the main category came first from the existing brand communication literature to map the SME social media content strategies onto the theory of brand communication. Therefore, RQ2 to RQ4, derived from the past branding literature, served as the three major brand communication strategies consisting of (1) brand identity presentation; (2) brand related-marketing activity practice; and (3) use of secondary associations.

On the other hand, the subcategories or the social media content strategies of SMEs were specified by exploring the Facebook posts of SME brand to capture the uniqueness of brand communication in the world of small and medium businesses. Due to a large number of materials, our data-driven part of the coding frame was

developed from 40% of the content systematically randomized from every selected brand. After that, the subcategories were generated by using the open coding strategy adapted from grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The data-driven coding frame was tried out and revised to the final version (See Appendix) by two coders to achieve the content validity and intercoder reliability according to the practice suggested by Campbell, Quincy, Osseman, and Pedersen (2013). Here the unit of coding was the same as the unit of analysis, as a post from SMEs' Facebook pages is short and contains only one main idea. Intercoder reliability for the trial and main coding periods were 75.0% and 82.0% respectively. Based on several guidances (Fahy, 2001; Kurasaki, 2000), the two values showed a relatively high degree of reliability.

**Table 1:** Characteristics of the Awarded SME Brands Chosen for the Content Analysis

Brand name	Business description	Facebook brand page created year	Average number of Facebook post per month	Number of Facebook brand page followers
Royal Diamond	Hotel	2010	6	4,423
Amorn	Pearl farm	2010	17	29,777
Albedo	Leather goods	2011	15	15,229
Kiosk	Steel furniture	2010	23	30,752
Globish	Online English school	2015	37	562,369
Takabb	Herbal candy	2010	7	7,507
Tofusan	Soy milk	2011	12	103,554
Chokdee	Dim sum	2009	8	35,683

## Results

Total 3,147 Facebook posts of eight SME brands which received the national SME brand award were qualitatively analyzed. The qualitative content analysis yielded 19 sub-categories of SME social media content strategies, which could be further sorted into all three major theoretical-

driven categories (See Table 2). Although adopted only some content strategies, every SME brand practiced all three core concepts of brand communication as follows.

**Table 2** Content Strategies Used for Brand Communication on Social Media of Selected SME Brands

Content Strategies	Royal Diamond (Hotel)	Amorn (Pearl farm)	Albedo (Leather goods)	Kiosk (Steel furniture)	Globish (Online English school)	Takabb (Herbal candy)	Tofusan (Soy milk)	Chokdee (Dim sum)
<b>Brand identity</b>								
<u>Brand positioning</u>								
Unique brand attributes	1 (0.8%)	24 (6.0%)	45 (12.3%)	30 (4.4%)	15 (1.7%)	-	26 (8.8%)	9 (4.6%)
Brand culture and values	22 (16.9%)	118 (29.7%)	6 (1.6%)	3 (0.4%)	21 (2.3%)	18 (10.2%)	1 (0.3%)	6 (3.1%)
<b>Brand personality</b>								
Greeting and wishes	3 (2.3%)	9 (2.3%)	15 (4.1%)	10 (1.5%)	6 (0.6%)	12 (6.8%)	12 (4.1%)	9 (4.6%)
Tips and tricks	33 (25.4%)	26 (6.5%)	108 (29.3%)	265 (38.6%)	279 (31.1%)	6 (3.4%)	86 (29.1%)	24 (12.3%)
Situational content	2 (1.5%)	17 (4.3%)	3 (0.8%)	-	33 (3.7%)	60 (33.9%)	1 (0.3%)	-
Good deed	33 (25.4%)	40 (10.1%)	9 (2.4%)	42 (6.2%)	24 (2.7%)	9 (5.1%)	22 (7.4%)	3 (1.5%)
Cheer-up quote	-	-	6 (1.6%)	-	198 (22.1%)	-	4 (1.4%)	-
Thank you note	14 (10.8%)	17 (4.3%)	-	-	9 (1.0%)	-	-	-
Spokescharacter	-	-	-	-	-	-	2 (0.6%)	-
<b>Brand-related marketing activities</b>								
Marketing mix	10 (7.7%)	63 (15.9%)	165 (44.7%)	319 (46.5%)	168 (18.7%)	36 (20.3%)	102 (34.5%)	84 (43.1%)
Contest, game, & giveaway	3 (2.3%)	4 (1.0%)	-	4 (0.6%)	21 (2.3%)	30 (16.9%)	5 (1.7%)	27 (13.8%)
Consumer survey	-	-	3 (0.8%)	5 (0.7%)	-	-	3 (1.0%)	3 (1.5%)
Special deal for fans	-	24 (6.0%)	-	2 (0.3%)	19 (2.1%)	-	4 (1.4%)	-
Hiring announcement	3 (2.3%)	-	3 (0.8%)	3 (0.4%)	30 (3.3%)	-	6 (2.0%)	3 (1.5%)

Table 2 continued

Content Strategies	Royal Diamond (Hotel)	Amorn (Pearl farm)	Albedo (Leather goods)	Kiosk (Steel furniture)	Globish (Online English school)	Takabb (Herbal candy)	Tofusan (Soy milk)	Chokdee (Dim sum)
<b>Secondary associations</b>								
Award	6 (4.6%)	11 (2.8%)	3 (0.8%)	3 (0.4%)	16 (1.8%)	-	4 (1.4%)	-
Consumer reviews	-	1 (0.3%)	3 (0.8%)	3 (0.4%)	3 (0.3%)	3 (1.7%)	9 (3.0%)	12 (6.2%)
Press recognition	-	9 (2.3%)	-	-	40 (4.5%)	-	3 (1.0%)	12 (6.2%)
Cobranding	-	32 (8.0%)	-	-	12 (1.3%)	-	6 (2.0%)	3 (1.5%)
Celebrity endorsement	-	2 (0.5%)	-	-	3 (0.3%)	3 (1.7%)	-	-
<b>Total (100%)</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>686</b>	<b>897</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>195</b>

*SMEs' Main Brand Communication Strategy 1: Presenting Brand Identity*

Thai SMEs communicated their brand identities via Facebook posts showing the position and the personality of the brand. For positioning their brands in the mind of consumers, seven from eight SMEs expressed their unique brand attributes through messages elaborating the brand distinct qualities derived from the innovation of the product, production process, and even post-purchase service. To accentuate the uniqueness of brand attributes, not only claims were posted, but the comparison of advantages between the specific brands and others in the same product type were made with no direct mentions to the competitors' brand names. Another way used by all selected SMEs to present their brand position was communicating brand culture and values. Sentences stated the organization philosophy, such as sustainable development (Amorn), customer satisfaction (Kiosk), and freshness (Chokdee) were posted with the concrete evidence like candid pictures showing the atmosphere of the shop or behind-the-scenes of staffs' working and training activities. For example, Takabb herbal candy published the photos of staffs' annual health check with the text 'We

always stay healthy and believe in work-life balance.

SME brand identity was also conveyed through Facebook posts revealing brand personality or the human-like characteristics. Content strategies related to brand personality adopted by all SMEs included three types: (1) tips and tricks regarding products and lifestyles of target customers, for instance, guidelines for choosing the right-for-you product and how to take good care of it, where to chill out on Friday nights; (2) good deed, which was Facebook status about the contributions of SMEs to their communities such as giving some products to people in needs who live in the nearby area; as well as (3) greeting and wishes, which included messages of hopes for their Facebook fans' happiness on the special global and local occasions, for example, the new year celebration of the western, Chinese and Thai culture. Some brands even sent good messages on specific events held in their business areas such as Phuket vegan festival (Amorn). These three content strategies respectively conveyed brand personalities including expert, kind-hearted, and caring. Besides greeting and wishing messages, three SMEs expressed more of care by regularly posting cheer-up quotes for their Facebook followers such as "We know you are tired from

working hard, be relaxed and keep fighting.” (Albedo). Gratitude personality trait was also found on some selected brands’ Facebook pages, as they published texts and pictures as thank you notes for each individual customer as well as other brand supporters, such as investors, visitors, and even the TV shows that presented their stories. Interestingly, six SME brands appeared trendy by associating their brands with movies in the theater, catchy phrases on the internet, and TV dramas for situational contents. To illustrate, Takabb, an herbal candy brand that means a centipede, posted a parody of the showing TV drama titled ‘Tayart Asoon’ (The heir of the demon) whose female protagonist, ‘Khun Yai Worrarnart’ (Grandma Worrarnart), can spit centipedes to harm her enemy. Lastly, the content regarding spokes-character which reflects the cute personality of a brand was presented by the only one SME. Tofusan, a soy milk brand, presented short animated video clips featuring its brand mascot called Tofu boy on its Facebook page.

#### *SMEs’ Main Brand Communication Strategy 2: Practicing Brand-related Marketing Activities*

Apart from brand identity presentation, selected SMEs integrated their brands with marketing activities posted on Facebook pages. All brand pages published marketing mix particularly the advantages and usage of existing and new products, sales promotion, contact information, opening times, plus consumer fair attendance. To boost brand recognition and recall, seven SMEs often created contests, games, and giveaways related to the brand and product information, for example, asking their Facebook fans to repeat the brand’s slogan and to guess the latest product from the silhouette. Gift vouchers of the brand were often used as incentives to increase participants who have to answer the quiz and follow, like, and share the activity posts as well. For a bigger prize, such as three-night stays in a luxury seaside hotel (Takabb), SMEs’ Facebook fans were asked to participate in a more

challenging competition, for example, slogan and tagline writing contests which obviously create some content benefit for a brand. Besides being eligible for winning gifts, members of SME brand pages received hot offers or special deal exclusively for fans in the form of discounts (Amorn, Globish) or e-coupons (Tofusan). This marketing activity may help increase brand followers as well as maintain the relationship with current fans. While giving brand information, SMEs also managed to receive feedback from their Facebook fans. Consumer survey either generated by free online-questionnaire websites or just a quick question that can be answered by choosing Facebook reaction buttons was posted on SMEs’ Facebook brand pages to ask for their targets’ opinions on brand and product development. Incentives, such as an extension of the warranty period, were sometimes given to encourage the participation (Kiosk). Lastly, some SME brands sought for the human resource by publishing hiring announcements on their Facebook walls. Most of them needed more online brand and marketing communication staffs particularly branded content writers (Globish, Tofusan).

#### *SMEs’ Main Brand Communication Strategy 3: Leveraging Secondary Associations*

SME brands interviewed also expressed their brands’ uniqueness and favorability by associating the brand with several positive sources. Consumer reviews were shared from the authors’ social media accounts to seven of eight SMEs’ Facebook brand pages to ensure brand quality. Awards and certificates from national and international organizations were also posted to empirically support brands’ unique attributes and to show the relentless brand development. For instance, the Royal diamond hotel posted a status about receiving a trophy from the governor of Petchburi province for winning the worth-staying place award. Another type of secondary associations posted on Facebook for SME brand fame and credibility was media recognition which



usually was news and articles about SME brands shared from the websites of mass media, as some SME brand owners were invited to share their success stories on TV, newspapers, and magazines. Furthermore, few SME brands published content regarding pictures of celebrities, such as Thai and foreign actors using their products to show that the brands were accepted by famous people. Another kind of secondary associations found in SME brand communication was the co-branding strategy practiced by bundling products with another SME brands' or big brands' in complementary product categories. For example, Tofusan's flavored soymilk was advertised on its Facebook page with seasoned granola from an SME branded Diamond grain as a perfect combination for breakfast.

## Discussions and Implications

The findings revealed that successful SME brands used various content strategies which are suitable for their business characteristics and limitations and reflect all main aspects of brand communication theory including presenting brand identity, practicing brand-related marketing activities, and leveraging secondary associations.

Worth to be noted here as brand communication lessons learned from successful cases are several unique practices analyzed from selected SME Facebook brand pages. First, clear brands' unique attributes were directly delivered by all brands. The simple technique, such as making a comparison with other brands was also used. Small brands in this study seemed not to count on sophisticated words but to speak sincerely from their hearts. This strategy might not work for big brands, but it is possible for SMEs, as the identity of small brands mostly stems from the owner's passion which is unique in itself (Rode & Vallaster, 2005; Spence & Essoussi, 2010). Hence, the freshness of the idea, although was simply presented, still impressed consumers.

In the aspect of brand culture and value, concrete evidence, such as photos of staffs diligently working, were used. A picture is worth a

thousand words. Moreover, without interrupting the daily routines of workers, SME can generate this kind of content every day with a small budget. Therefore, this strategy which was not found in top brands' content (Ashley & Tuten, 2014; Shen & Bissell, 2013) become useful for SME brands which are less formal and usually have limited resource for practicing brand communication (Gilmore, Carson, & Grant, 2001; Centeno & Hart, 2012).

Brand identity of SMEs was also portrayed through the Facebook content which reflected brand personalities that are congruent with values of the society. Here, SME brand personalities were communicated in seven forms of the content which were: (1) tips and tricks; (2) good deed; (3) greeting and wishes; (4) cheer-up quotes; (5) thank you notes; (6) real-time contents; and (7) spokescharacter. These types of posts respectively showed the expert, kind-hearted, caring, gratitude, and cute characteristics which conform perfectly to Thais' cultural values and identity (Sirarajanana, 2017; Vatanasapt & Stobbe, 2018).

Furthermore, the findings of SME brand communication strategies regarding brand personality also reflected the SMEs' characteristics in the aspect of the need for local support. Although Facebook pages can be accessed from anywhere having internet service, the results here showed that SMEs tended to publish the information or activities specific to an individual customer or the community. As SMEs become a part of and need the support from the locals after operating for a while (Gibson & van der Vaart, 2008). So, we can, to some degree, conclude that the characteristics of small and medium businesses affect their content strategies for brand communication.

Another smart strategy relevant to SME characteristics spotted here is the use of situational content to craft the trendy personality. Because of the smaller size, SME brands are more flexible than large companies (Gilmore et al., 2001). Therefore, they are faster to associate their brands with the hottest topics on the internet right now.

This content strategy is also suitable for SME brands. It requires only a small amount of money, as SMEs do not have to create the whole new content that grabs the audience's attention. They only need to monitor the trend on the internet and use some level of the creativity to blend the brand into the hot issues!

In the domain of brand-related marketing activities, this study noticed the effective use of incentives among successful SME brands. Rewards were used in various brand communication activities, for example, games, contests, and consumer survey. Brand-involved gifts, such as vouchers, were regularly given in a reasonable amount with the conditions that stimulate Facebook followers' participation and responses in the form of comments, likes, and shares. The appropriate use of incentives, as some authors suggested, increases consumer-brand interaction (Rohm, Kaltcheva, & Milne, 2013). Consequently, the growing number of persons seeing social media through unpaid distribution or the organic social media reach will help reduce the advertising cost of SME brands.

Moreover, for making the most of social media usage, consumer surveys and hiring announcements were posted on SME Facebook brand pages. These activities did not appear on big brands' official social media (Ashley & Tuten, 2014; Shen & Bissell, 2013). But SME brands, whose characteristics were more down to earth, can benefit greatly from this type of content, as it is the almost-free-of-charge way to recruit new staffs and to gain valuable consumer insights.

Findings also revealed the usage of secondary associations in SMEs' social media content for brand communication. Interestingly, Consumer reviews were shared directly from the authors, probably because this kind of third-party

voice is highly credible when the writers reveal their identity (Kusumasondjaja, Shanka, & Marchegiani, 2012). Moreover, it is low in cost of creation. What an SME brand need to do is keeping its eyes on consumers' opinions about the brand appearing on the internet and sharing some positive feedback on the brand's social media. All in all, the findings of this study demonstrated how successful Thai SMEs strategically and creatively managed their content on social media to overcome a lack of limited resources in the right direction to all aspects of brand communication practices including brand identity presentation, doing brand-related marketing communication activities, and using secondary associations.

Theoretical, practical, and managerial implications of this study were also listed here respectively. First, content strategies found here can enrich the theory regarding brand communication on social media in the context of small and medium businesses. Second, the data-driven subcategories obtained from this study can be used as an instant coding frame for the future quantitative content analysis research done in the setting of SME social media. Third, message strategies found here were derived from successful Thai SME brands. Hence, they serve as useful guidelines for local SMEs that would like to improve their brand communication and benefit the international SME brands operating in Thai market as well.

There is also the study's limitation which becomes an opportunity for the future research. As the material of this study was solely from Thai SME brands, cross-cultural research is encouraged to increase the breadth and depth of the knowledge regarding SME brand communication on social media.

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## Appendix

**Table 1A** Coding Frame Used for the Analysis of Selected SME Brands' Social Media Content

Type of content strategy	Definition
<b>Brand identity</b>	
<u>Brand positioning</u>	
Unique brand attributes	The distinctiveness that, according to the brand's claim, does not exist in other competitors Example: "We are the only 24-hour-open shop selling freshly-made-by-hand dim sum." (Chokdee)
Brand culture and values	The philosophy that guides the brand's operation; Beliefs that the brand adheres to Example: "Quality and service are our heart." (Amorn)
<u>Brand personality</u>	
Greeting and wishes	Kind words from the brand to its fans on any special occasion Keyword: Happy, Wish Example: "We hope you have a very happy, healthy, and wealthy new year." (Kiosk)
Tips and tricks	Suggestions that make its fans' lives easier Remark: Tips about products must be applicable for buying any brand in the same category Example: How often should men get a haircut? (Albedo)
Situational content	When the brand links itself with topics or events that are popular, highly-talked-about on the internet at that time Example: "Come and catch the Pokemon here!" (Royal diamond)
Good deed	Anything that was done by the brand for helping others Example: "Kiosk gave the new cupboard to schools in remote areas." (Kiosk)
Cheer-up quote	Messages from the brand that make their fans feel good when they have bad days Example: "Tomorrow is Monday! Are you ready for work? Keep fighting! We love you all." (Globish)
Thank you note	Messages expressing the brand's gratefulness for others' kindness Keyword: Thank you, Thanks Example: "Thank you Khun (Mister) for celebrating your wedding here!" (Royal diamond)
Spokescharacter	Content regarding the brand's character Example: "Come and join us in knowing more about our mascot, Tofu boy!" (Tofusan)
<b>Brand-related marketing activities</b>	
Marketing mix	Details of product, price, place, and promotion that were given for facilitating the selling and buying Example: "Tom Yum Hed Kon, our new dish for the vegan festival!" (Royal diamond)

Table 1A (continued)

Type of content strategy	Definition
Contest, game, & giveaway	Online competition, quizzes, sweepstakes with or with no incentives. The announcement of the winner Example: “Tag a friend who often gets a sore throat to win a cushion with Takabb logo.”
Consumer survey	Online questionnaires, Facebook polls, short questions published by the brand to ask for consumers’ opinions Example: “What is your most favorite flavor of Chinese buns?” (Chokdee)
Special deal for fans	Price reduction or any offer exclusively for the members of the brand’s Facebook page Example: “Hurry up! Special price for Amorn’s fans only...” (Amorn)
Hiring announcement	The brand’s job vacancies Example: “We are looking for a cool content writer...” (Globish)
<b>Secondary associations</b>	
Awards	The brand won any competition or received any certificate. Example: “We received a clean-food-good-taste certificate from Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives.” (Royal diamond)
Consumer reviews	Consumers’ opinions about the brand in any topics Example: “Let’s compare the amount of Tofu skin of each soy milk brand.” (Link shared from the customer’s Facebook by Tofusan)
Press recognition	The brand got attention from the mass media and was invited to share its story. Example: “Today, our co-founder was interviewed by Cleo magazine.” (Globish)
Cobranding	The brand was promoted together with another big or SME brand. Example: “We, Globish and Mind English (an SME brand), proudly present our new joint curriculum ....” (Globish)
Celebrity endorsement	Famous persons positively referred to the brand. Example: “We are pleased to welcome Khun Joy Rillanee (a famous Thai actress) to visit our pearl farm.” (Amorn)