Harnessing Social Media in Higher Education: An Examination of Advert Poster Design and Brand Identity within Thai Universities

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Article information	Abstract
	This study investigates the use of design elements in the advertisement posters on the Facebook pages of ten Thai universities, comprised of five government and five private institutions. Using the Multimodal Corpus Analysis Tool (MCAT), the study systematically analyzed the color characteristics and dominant colors employed in the universities' Facebook advertisement posters. Findings revealed that while color characteristics were similarly employed across the universities, the use of dominant colors varied significantly. Government universities were found to incorporate their theme colors in the designs, reflecting their brand identity. In contrast, private universities predominantly used colors to augment the content of their advertisements, rather than to represent their institutional identities. This study provides valuable insights into how different color and design elements are utilized by Thai universities in their social media communication to enhance their brand identities and content messaging.

INTRODUCTION

In the modern, digital age, social media has emerged as an inescapable force, effectively redefining the dynamics of communication, interaction, and information exchange. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram have rapidly evolved into potent avenues for brand communication, owing to their extensive reach and influential role in contemporary society (Hanna et al., 2011; Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Businesses across the globe have harnessed these platforms to enhance their brand visibility, engagement, and customer interaction. However, despite the widespread adoption and acknowledged benefits, there is a distinct lack of research regarding the application of social media in the realm of educational institutions. To shed light on the pervasiveness of social media, a 2022 report from the strategy consulting firm, OOSGA, highlighted that 81.2 percent of the Thai population actively engaged with various social media platforms, with Facebook standing out as the most popular choice (Infoquest, 2022; OOSGA, 2022; Statista, 2022). The appeal of Facebook extends beyond its primary function as a tool for personal communication. It has gradually morphed into a strategic

hub where businesses, retailers, and organizations establish a dynamic and interactive presence, thereby fostering a more immediate and personal connection with their customers and stakeholders.

In response to this social media phenomenon, educational institutions in Thailand, notably schools and universities, have begun to exploit the versatile features of Facebook. By creating official pages, these institutions can disseminate timely information, engage with their audience, and strengthen their community ties. A notable tactic employed in these communication strategies is the use of advertisement posters, primarily due to their ability to capture viewers' attention more effectively than conventional text-only posts. The strategic implementation of color design in these posters is crucial, as it not only enhances visual appeal but also plays a significant role in conveying the institution's identity and values, making it an indispensable element of effective communication. Building on this strategy, this study primarily aims to investigate the color design elements of advertisement posters featured on Thai universities' Facebook pages by utilizing an automated corpus-based tool. With this quantitative approach, a comparison of color design strategies utilized by each university can be conducted. Moreover, potential relationships between color design features and brand identity representation will be discussed.

Social media advertising

Social media can be described as an Internet-based communication network that allows users to communicate with others all over the world. The usage of social media has rapidly increased along with the improvement of information and communication technology. Nowadays, people spend an average of 2.31 hours per day using social media (Hootsuite, 2023). For this reason, social media has been acclaimed for having dramatic influences on every stage of the consumer decision-making process as well as influencing general opinions and attitude formation (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Social media has also become an important marketing tool for marketers to interact with their customers and gain access to their attitudes, needs, interests, preferences, wants and buying patterns (Maurer & Wiegmann, 2011). Prior research has discovered that an increase in consumer perception of online advertising is connected with an increase in online advertising effectiveness (Nasir et al., 2021). Advertising is essentially an art of persuasion. To create effective pieces of advertising, understanding the factors that can successfully persuade a user on social media is necessary (Ahmad et al., 2019; Lee & Hong, 2016).

Facebook is one of the most popular social network sites, with about 2,958 million global users in 2022 (Hootsuite, 2023). Its initial goal was to make the world more open and transparent by giving everyone the right to share and connect. After its popularity grew, it gradually became a powerful social media marketing tool. In the digital age, many people have their own personal webpages, such as Facebook pages, where they fill out information about themselves, post pictures, create their own blogs, upload their own videos and use these platforms for value creation and information exchange. This information is important for advertisers to understand the self-esteem and self-actualization of their target audience (Grames et al., 2019). Social media advertising also allows marketers to reach their target

audience in a cost-effective and highly targeted manner. By using tools such as Facebook Ads Manager, marketers can create and manage ad campaigns that target specific demographics, interests and behaviors. This allows them to deliver relevant and engaging content to their target audience and drive conversions (Kim et al., 2017). Additionally, social media advertising provides marketers with valuable data and insights that can be used to optimize their campaigns and improve their overall marketing strategy (Kumar et al., 2016).

Use of social media by universities

The importance of brand building in higher education has been increasingly recognized by institutions in many countries, including Thailand. A strong university brand can contribute to success in various dimensions, such as the recruitment of high-quality students, the development of student loyalty, and the strengthening of networks. As a result, effective brand building can lead to positive marketing outcomes for universities. A good brand image will enhance students' brand recognition of a university, which will lead to positive word-of-mouth behaviour and brand loyalty (Li et al., 2023). The proper management of brand identity is a crucial element of branding for universities. In addition to academic quality, students may also consider a university's brand personality and meaning when making their choice. More than that, a strong brand can attract talented staff who are not only skilled and knowledgeable but also possess attitudes and personalities that align with the university's needs (Trakulkasemsuk, 2020). Thus, this, in return, can lead to better reputation of the brand, in this case the university.

Social media has emerged as an important tool for universities to communicate their key messages and engage with various stakeholders, including prospective students, enrolled students, and alumni. Effective use of social media can foster a sense of community and engagement among a university's target audience, thereby building trust and loyalty towards the university brand (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). It is essential for universities to develop clear social media strategies and regularly monitor and evaluate their social media presence to ensure effective communication of their brand values and messages. Prospective students significantly use social media, in particular Facebook, as a resource when trying to decide which college or university to attend (Hesel, 2013). Facebook pages are widely used by universities as a means of improving communication with students. They provide universities with a platform to share information and engage with their target audience. By regularly posting updates, photos and videos, universities can showcase their campus, facilities and student life. This can help to create a positive impression among prospective students and build a sense of community among enrolled students and alumni.

In addition to organic content, universities can also use Facebook ads to reach a wider audience. By using Facebook Ads Manager, universities can create and manage ad campaigns that target specific demographics, interests and behaviors. This allows them to deliver relevant and engaging content to their target audience and drive conversions (Kim et al., 2017). Facebook ads provide universities with a cost-effective and highly targeted way to reach prospective students. By using tools such as custom audiences and lookalike audiences, universities can target individuals who are most likely to be interested in their programs and offerings. Additionally, Facebook ads provide universities with valuable data and insights that can be

used to optimize their campaigns and improve their overall marketing strategy (Kumar et al., 2016). Overall, Facebook pages and ads provide universities with powerful tools to communicate their key messages and engage with their target audience. By using these tools effectively, universities can improve their brand image and attract high-quality students.

Brand image and advert color design

Brand image is an overall impression that a person has about an object, typically defined as the sum of beliefs, attitudes, stereotypes, ideas, relevant behaviors or impressions that a person has towards the organization via his/her experience (Arpan et al., 2003; Sinanovic & Pestek, 2014). Effective brand building helps strengthen an organization's good reputation, amplify loyalty, support the perception of greater value and create positive experiences in customers' minds that they consider unique and useful (Healey, 2008; Kaputa, 2010). Good branding helps in creating a brand image and goodwill in the market. In the age of digital marketing, brand image represented through social media is considered as important as sales and profit. There is a continuous process to build a brand image. Typically, brand building can be roughly divided into two phases: before customers make their choice and after consumption. In the first phase, brand identity is created and then communicated to prospective customers, resulting in a short-term brand image in customers' perception. After customers have spent time using the product or service, they evaluate the brand image again based on their experiences, leading to a long-term image and satisfaction (Brown & Mazzarole, 2009; Hakala et al., 2010; Kotler & Keller, 2009; and Nguyen & LeBlanc, 2001). Throughout the branding process, marketing communication is one of the key activities that the organization should prioritize.

Through social media, consumers can quickly differentiate between brands by sight. Visual advertising on social media such as photos, banners and infographics contain both direct and indirect messages that communicate the brand to target customers. A strong brand visual identity system depends on attractive colors to be visible and differentiated. It also consistently uses the same color across all its visual materials. The use of color in branding can have a significant impact on consumer perception and behavior. Research has shown that color can influence emotions and decision-making (Labrecque & Milne, 2012). By using colors that are associated with their brand identity and values, organizations can create a consistent and recognizable visual identity across all their marketing materials. This can help to build trust and familiarity among their target audience. Additionally, the use of color can help convey specific messages or emotions to consumers. For example, blue is often associated with trust and reliability while green is associated with nature and sustainability (Singh, 2006). By carefully considering their use of color in branding materials, organizations can effectively communicate their key messages and attract their target audience.

The significance of color in university branding has been explored in various studies, which stress the importance of color as an essential element in shaping institutional image and attracting potential students. Arpan et al. (2003) provided a foundational understanding of how university image can be influenced by cognitive assessments, where color plays a crucial role. Their study indicates that color not only aids in immediate recognition but also helps in

forming the initial cognitive impressions that prospective students or stakeholders have toward an institution. The interrelation of color and institutional image is crucial in shaping student satisfaction and loyalty in the realm of higher education. Brown and Mazzarol (2009) underscore the significant role that visual identity, including the strategic use of color, plays in influencing a student's decision-making process during university selection. This visual identity forms a core part of the perceived image of an institution and is instrumental in attracting prospective students. Building on this, Sinanovic and Pestek (2014) delve into the role of public relations in enhancing a university's image, highlighting that a well-crafted visual identity, which encompasses color schemes, is crucial in strategic communication efforts aimed at bolstering the institution's reputation. Furthermore, Alwi and Kitchen (2014) investigate the impact of corporate brand image on behavioral responses within business schools, revealing that cognitive and affective attributes communicated through color have a profound effect on shaping prospective students' attitudes toward an institution. Lastly, the use of color in university branding is not only a matter of aesthetics but also a strategic tool that can influence perception, as shown by Zailskaitė-Jakštė et al. (2017), who examined brand communication in social media and the use of image colors in popular posts. Their findings suggest that universities can exploit specific colors in their social media presence to enhance engagement and recognition.

These studies collectively suggest that the choice of color in a university's branding efforts is not trivial. Colors are integral to the creation of a visual identity that communicates the institution's values and ethos, affects the emotional appeal to potential students, and can even impact internal stakeholders' sense of belonging and loyalty. The consistent application of specific color palettes across various mediums is therefore essential for universities to effectively manage their brand image and reputation. To date, there is a notable lack of investigation into how Thai universities use visual elements, such as advert posters, to communicate with their audience on social media platforms. This study addresses this gap in the literature by focusing on how Thai universities produce their advert posters on Facebook, particularly in their use of colors.

METHOD

Research sample and data collection

To gain insights into the relationship between advert poster design and brand identity representation among Thai universities on social media, this study embarked on a rigorous process of data collection. Advert posters were collated from the official Facebook pages of a selection of Thai universities, spanning from the most recent posts in mid-2022 backwards, until a minimum of 100 posters for each institution were acquired. The selection of universities was accomplished through a strategic and impartial process. Both government and private universities were included in the study to capture a comprehensive view of the sector and account for possible differences in advert design strategies. This assumption stemmed from the fact that government and private institutions might possess distinct operational dynamics, resource availability, and branding approaches, potentially influencing their social media communication strategies.

The source for university selection was derived from the Thai university rankings provided by UniRank (https://www.4icu.org/th/) in August, 2022. The aim of this study was to investigate the social media communication of Thai universities. UniRank is an appropriate source for this purpose, as its ranking methodology is based on universities' web presence and popularity, rather than academic qualities like other available university ranking sources. For practicality in data collection, the names of the top ten Thai government universities and the top ten Thai private universities were enumerated, and a random selection process was subsequently deployed to select five universities from each category. The chosen methodology ensured a fair representation of Thai universities, encompassing both government and private institutions, and allowed for a broad perspective on how these different institutions employ advert posters to articulate their brand identities on social media. Detailed information about the selected corpora is provided in Table 1.

Table 1
Thai universities and the numbers of PR posters

	Government university					Private university				
	CMU	CU	KU	MU	PSU	ABAC	BU	SPU	SU	UTCC
Number of Posters	109	108	110	109	114	104	112	113	114	112

CMU: Chiangmai University, CU: Chulalongkorn University, KU: Kasetsart University, MU: Mahidol University, PSU: Prince of Songkhla University, ABAC: Assumption University, BU: Bangkok University, SPU: Sripatum University, SU: Siam University, UTCC: University of Thai Commercial Chamber

Data analysis: Utilizing Multimodal Corpus Analysis Tool (MCAT)

Most studies on the multimodal analysis of poster designs are typically conducted qualitatively and with a small sample size. This approach's primary limitation is its inability to provide generalizable patterns from the findings. To overcome this limitation, this study adopted a corpus-based approach. The advert posters from the ten universities were subjected to an automated analysis utilizing the Multimodal Corpus Analysis Tool (MCAT)[1]. This software was developed by the Text Analysis Research Group (TARG) at the School of Liberal Arts, King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi, Thailand. MCAT is engineered for comprehensive evaluation of multimodal data, including online adverts. For a more detailed overview of the software, the reader is referred to the work of Watson Todd et al. (2023).

Figure 1 presents the main page, 'Analysis', which summarizes the overall information of the corpus. Specific results of each advert poster can be viewed from the second tab, 'Results' (see Figure 2).

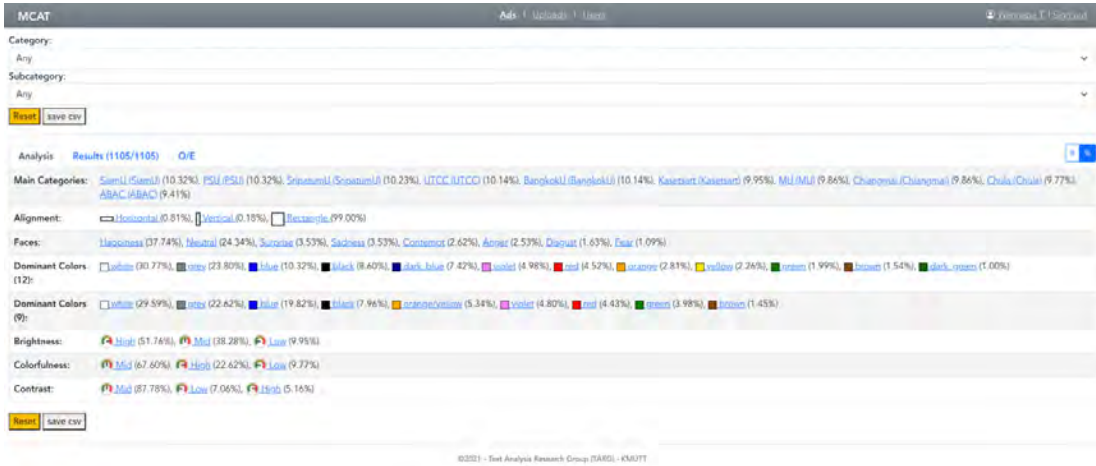[1] The link to MCAT: https://targ.kmutt.ac.th/mcat/

Figure 1 The main page of the customized MCAT for this research project
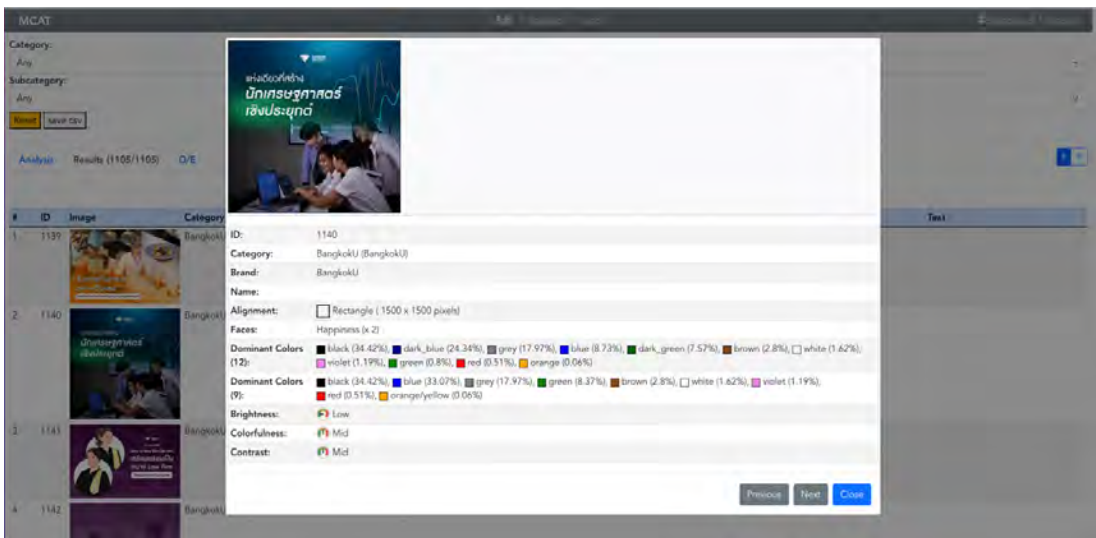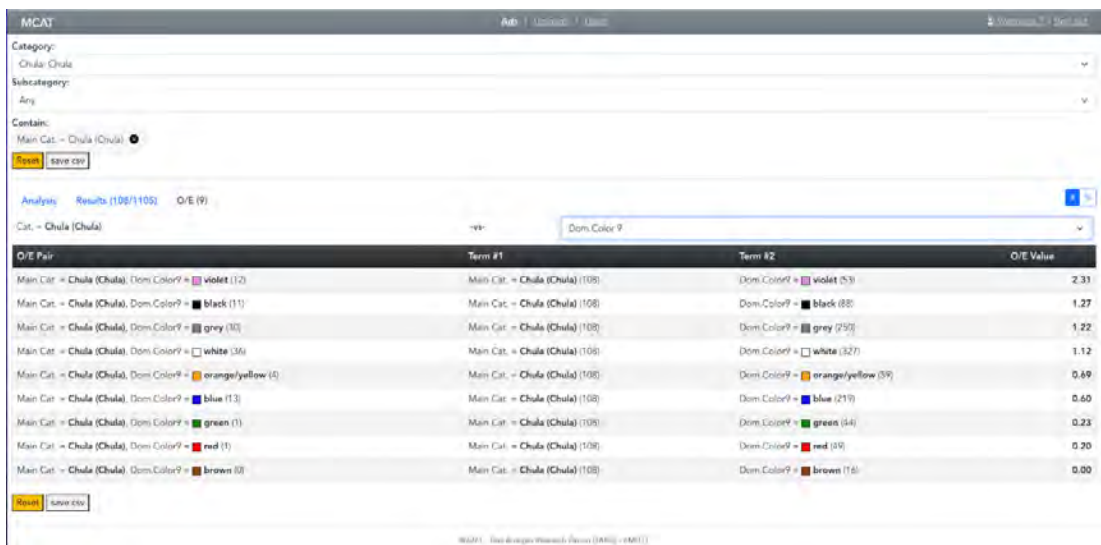

Figure 2 The 'Results' page of the customized MCAT for this research project

The dataset of this study was incorporated into the MCAT software, with the permission from the leader of the research group[2]. This research concentrated on two key color design elements: color characteristics (including brightness, colorfulness, and contrast), and 9 dominant colors. MCAT calculated the values automatically based on the computer graphic value benchmarks and theoretical formula inputs such as RGBA color space, the values of black and white, etc. As a results, MCAT provides three levels of brightness, colorfulness, and contrast (high, mid, low) and the dominant colors which means the colors that take the highest proportion in a poster. Moreover, the machine-identified values ensure accurate and reliable outputs that human eyes may not always distinguish.

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[2] The usage of MCAT is limited to the corpus of online advertisements stored in its internal database. The software does not permit users to upload and analyze their own datasets.

The MCAT utilizes an Observed over Expected (O/E) value statistical methodology to discern distinctive utilization of poster design elements among different universities. This O/E value quantifies the deviation of observed frequency from what would be expected by chance, thereby facilitating the identification of significant design characteristics. One notable limitation of the O/E value approach lies in the absence of a predetermined cut-off point for significance. To surmount this, the researchers conducted a careful examination of the results to determine appropriate criteria based on the data patterns observed. In this study, design features were classified as significant if they met two conditions: an O/E value equal to or greater than 1.5, and a minimum frequency of occurrence equal to or greater than 5. These thresholds were set to ensure that identified features were not only statistically significant but also appeared frequently enough to be considered meaningful in the context of our analysis. An example of the O/E output from MCAT is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3 The 'O/E' page of the customized MCAT for this research project

FINDINGS

Color characteristics

The color characteristics of the poster designs were evaluated with regard to three parameters: 'Brightness', 'Colorfulness', and 'Contrast'. The overall patterns of the proportional distribution of each characteristic in the corpus of the ten universities' advert posters is provided in Table 2.

Table 2

Color characteristics of the Thai universities' advert postures

	Brightness	Colorfulness	Contrast
High	51.76%	22.62%	5.16%
Mid	38.28%	67.60%	87.78%
Low	9.95%	9.77%	7.06%

• *Brightness*

Table 2 indicates that approximately 51.76% of the advertisement posters from the ten universities utilized a high level of brightness in their design, while 38.28% used a mid-level of brightness. Only a small proportion (9.95%) employed a low level of brightness. To further assess the significance of brightness levels used, the Observed/Expected (O/E) scores were analyzed.

Table 3

O/E scores of the degree of brightness

	Government university					Private university				
	CMU	CU	KU	MU	PSU	ABAC	BU	SPU	SU	UTCC
High	1.48	1.26	1.33	1.13	1.06	0.87	0.25	0.88	0.66	1.05
Mid	0.57	0.70	0.78	0.88	1.07	0.90	*1.63**	1.07	1.26	0.95
Low	0.09	0.74	0.09	0.73	0.35	*2.02**	*2.42**	0.88	*1.76**	0.89

*indicates the significant O/E scores.

The O/E scores presented in Table 3 indicate that there is no significant difference in the use of 'high' brightness among the ten universities. This suggests that a high level of brightness is commonly preferred in the advertisement poster designs of all ten universities. Such a design technique aligns with established theories of advertisement design. Bright colors can make an advertisement more vivid and draw viewers' attention (Adams, 2017). Posters with a high level of brightness tend to appear clearer, making the textual information more easily readable. Therefore, a high degree of brightness is likely the most popular choice for university Facebook advertisements.

Figure 4 Examples of Facebook advert posters with high brightness

While examining the use of mid-level brightness, it was observed that BU employed it significantly more in their poster designs compared to other universities. This indicates that BU's approach to brightness in their posters is distinct. Furthermore, it was noted that in

BU's posters with mid-level brightness, images took up a significantly larger space than text. This design choice stands in contrast to the application of high brightness, which is typically associated with the presentation of more textual information.

Figure 5 Examples of Facebook advert posters with mid brightness by BU

Low level of brightness was significantly favored in the poster designs of both BU and SU. Closer analysis revealed that most of these posters featured backgrounds in black or dark blue, paired with luminous colors. Typically, content related to technology or depicting futuristic elements made use of this lower brightness level.

Figure 6 Examples of Facebook advert posters with mid brightness by BU and SU

Even in the posters produced by the other universities where low brightness was not the predominant choice of their design, when the content is about technology or future, dark background with low brightness and luminous colors was applied.

Figure 7 Examples of Facebook advert posters with low brightness by MU, CU, UTCC, and SPU

• *Colorfulness*

Table 2 summarizes that the majority of advertisement posters from all the universities (67.60%) featured a mid-level of colorfulness. A smaller portion (22.62%) displayed a high level of

colorfulness, while only a few (9.77%) had a low level. Generally, this suggests that the typical Facebook advertisement design among the ten Thai universities favors a mid-level of colorfulness. Institutional organizations' advert posters should ideally strike a balance between being trustworthy and engaging. In this light, a moderate degree of colorfulness appears to be the optimum choice. High colorfulness might render the posters excessively playful or immature, while a low level could potentially make them seem uninspiring or dull.

Table 4
O/E scores and (percentages) of the degree of colorfulness

	Government university					Private university				
	CMU	**CU**	**KU**	**MU**	**PSU**	**ABAC**	**BU**	**SPU**	**SU**	**UTCC**
High	0.36	0.57	0.76	1.25	1.20	1.06	1.06	1.21	1.16	1.30
Mid	1.09	1.12	1.15	0.89	1.03	1.00	0.95	0.90	0.92	0.91
Low	*1.78**	1.13	0.46	1.12	0.26	0.78	1.18	1.17	1.16	0.91

* indicates the significant O/E scores.

Analysis of the O/E score in Table 4 reveals a single significant finding: CMU's advertisement posters significantly favored low colorfulness more often than those from other universities. Upon examining the posters with low colorfulness, no definitive design patterns emerged. These posters typically featured a mix of a few pale colors. Consequently, the significance of the O/E value could be attributable to chance.

Figure 8 Examples of Facebook advert posters with low colorfulness by CMU

• *Contrast*

Table 2 clearly shows that the overwhelming majority of universities (87.78%) opted for a mid-level of contrast in their Facebook poster designs. A smaller fraction used low and high contrast, at 7.06% and 5.16%, respectively. According to color design theory, high-contrast images are produced by combining tones that are opposite to each other, which can effectively draw viewers' attention. Yet, excessive contrast may result in a design that is either irritating or perplexing (Sherin, 2012). Therefore, a mid-level of contrast is likely considered a more prudent choice in poster design, explaining its popularity.

Table 5

O/E scores of the degree of contrast

	Government university					Private university				
	CMU	**CU**	**KU**	**MU**	**PSU**	**ABAC**	**BU**	**SPU**	**SU**	**UTCC**
High	0.00	0.17	0.88	0.88	*2.38**	1.49	0.34	0.68	*1.53**	*1.55**
Mid	1.07	1.04	1.01	1.05	0.96	0.95	1.04	0.92	0.97	0.93
Low	0.77	1.04	0.90	0.38	0.37	1.22	0.88	2.13	0.86	1.39

* indicates the significant O/E scores. Even if the O/E scores low contrast by SPU is above 1.5, it is not considered significant because there were only 3 posters (see the criteria in the methodology section).

The O/E scores indicated that high-contrast posters were significantly favored by PSU, SU, and UTCC. An examination of these high-contrast posters revealed that they often featured starkly opposing colors, such as red, green, blue, black, and white, which made them stand out. Furthermore, the content of these high-contrast posters typically aimed to prompt immediate action from the viewers.

Figure 9 Examples of Facebook advert posters with high contrast by PSU, SU, and UTCC

Dominant colors

Within MCAT, the program generates results based on two distinct color schemes, namely, a 9-color scheme and a 12-color scheme. For the purpose of this study, it was observed that the 9-color scheme rendered more insightful and actionable results in the context of analyzing university posture design for social media platforms. The dominant colors incorporated into the poster designs across the ten selected universities are outlined in Table 4, as follows.

Table 6

The dominant colors of advert postures and their O/E values

	Government university					Private university				
	CMU	**CU**	**KU**	**MU**	**PSU**	**ABAC**	**BU**	**SPU**	**Siam**	**UTCC**
University's color	Violet	Pink	Green	Blue	Blue	White Red Blue	Violet Orange	Blue Pink	Brown Yellow	Blue
9 Dominant colours										
White	1.55		1.56		NONE					NONE
Blue				1.57						
Grey								1.56		
Black						1.93	2.01		1.54	
Green			2.51						1.54	

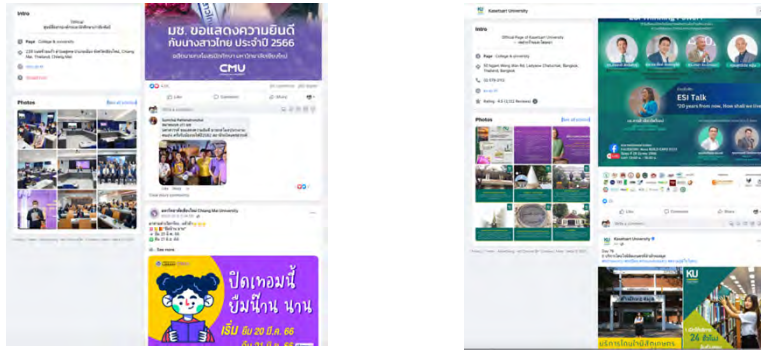|	Government university					Private university				
	CMU	**CU**	**KU**	**MU**	**PSU**	**ABAC**	**BU**	**SPU**	**Siam**	**UTCC**
University's color	Violet	Pink	Green	Blue	Blue	White Red Blue	Violet Orange	Blue Pink	Brown Yellow	Blue
Violet	1.91	2.31			NONE					NONE
Red							3.02		1.97	
Orange/Yellow				1.54			1.83			
Brown							3.69	1.83		

Generally, in discussions concerning the interplay of colors and brand identities, one might anticipate that corporate colors would feature prominently in their posture designs. As Table 2 elucidates, the PR posters of Thai government universities, with the exception of PSU, predominantly incorporated their university colors into the design. Contrastingly, only one private university showcased its color dominantly, albeit their secondary one (with Violet being the primary color of BU and Orange as the secondary). UTCC was the only private university whose PR postures did not exhibit any dominant colors.

**Figure 10** Social media posters with the university's color

DISCUSSION

This study reveals comparable color design attributes, such as color characteristics and dominant colors, in the Facebook page posters of the selected top Thai government and private universities. In terms of color characteristics, the findings have demonstrated the commonly shared design norms which are the use of high to mid-level of brightness, mid-level of colorfulness, and mid-level of contrast. These techniques can be considered as a neutral way of color design (Adams, 2017; Sherin, 2012), offering a foundational guideline for designers. Nonetheless, for a distinctive appeal, experimenting with creative variations from these norms is encouraged. The critical differentiation lies in the use of dominant colors. The government universities prominently exhibit their institutional colors, while the private universities take a more diverse approach, not necessarily reflecting their institutional colors. It is acknowledged that color is a vital element of brand identity recognition (Chang & Lin, 2010; Singh, 2006), often aiding the recall of brand image (Jin et al., 2019). The Thai government universities in this study appear to integrate this principle into their social media posters. As a result, when the viewers visited their Facebook pages and looked through the pictures in different posts, they could easily observe the university's color and associate the color with the name of the university.

Figure 11 Screen captures of CMU's (violet) and KU's (green) Facebook page

In contrast to the government universities, the advertisement posters of Thai private universities did not predominantly display their theme colors. Rather, their posters showcased a wide range of colors across various posts and promotional materials.
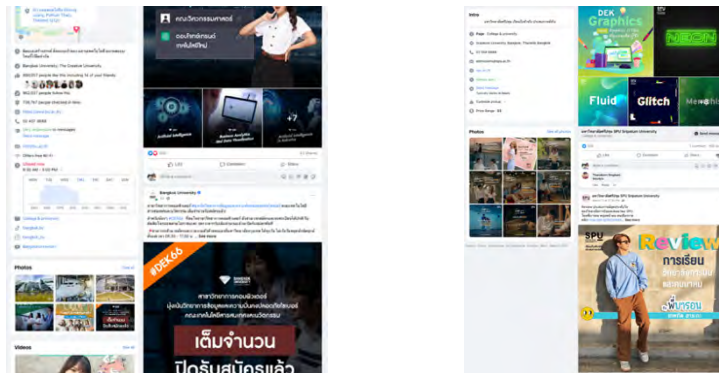
Figure 12 Screen captures of BU's (violet & orange) and SPU's (blue & pink) Facebook page

Thai government universities generally have long been established (70 to 100 years) and Thai people have valued the privilege of studying in the government universities. Thus, Thai people would be familiar with their colors. Using the university's color in the posters could make the viewers recognize the brand easily. In addition, Thai government universities' colors are special as they are usually associated to the important figures in the Thai society (e.g., Pink of Chulalongkorn university is associated to the color of King Rama V, Blue of Mahidol university is associated with the color symbol of monarchy). Hence, it is very certain that the top Thai universities should be proud of their long history, reputation, and identity. Thus, they might intentionally prefer to present their colors prominently to remind the viewers of their name and identity. On the contrary, Thai private universities have been becoming more favored only in the recent decades, even though some of them have been established for a relatively long time (66 years for BU, the first private Thai university). Thai people usually do not recognize their colors. This might be the reason why the Thai private universities did not truly prefer the design technique of presenting their colors in their posters. Instead of presenting the theme color dominantly, the Thai private universities seem to use a variety of colors depending on the content and other design elements of the adverts.

Advert design for social media communication can be different from that for traditional brand communication (Williams et al., 2012). It seems that the aim of social media communication is to increase customers' awareness and engagement rather than to recall customers' recognition of the brand identity. This means the viewers who visit the university's Facebook page should have known the university already and thus they would pay attention to the content rather than the color and brand identity. This does not mean that advert design is not essential. However, aesthetic color design that complement the content can be more persuasive than the use of universities' colors repeatedly. To add to this point, the researchers have had a discussion with two Thai experts in social media advert design. They suggested that social media adverts should emphasize speedy and timely communication. Advert design for social media might not have to be extremely neat as what has been done for tradition print materials. The use of available commercial design templates that go well with the content might be a reasonable solution. According to this, we may interpret that the Thai private universities seem to comply to social media communication strategies, while the Thai government universities seem to apply the tradition advert design ones, still.

One interesting point that should be noted here is the use of the dominant colors of the Thai government universities. The same color space can be varied in tones. The computer program might roughly classify those different color tones as one. Nonetheless, we could observe the differences very easily.

Figure 13 Example posters of CU with different tones of pink

Figure 14 Example posters of MU with different tones of blue

This finding may be interpreted that even though the designers kept using the university's theme color in their poster design, there might be no specified color value of their institution, or the designers might not be aware of it. Thus, this can be questioned for further investigation if the fixed cooperate color is significant in strengthening the brand identity of universities.

For the Thai private universities, it can be observed that dark colors (i.e., grey, black, brown) were used dominantly. The dark colors seem to be the safe colors in design and they have gained popularity with internet users and designers (Jerelyn, 2020). In addition, based on the study of Zailskaitė-Jakštė et al. (2017) dark-color posters tend to be preferred by young people. Thus, this would perfectly match with the university's target customers which are students. Overall, the findings of this study may suggest that for Thai government universities, the university's color is highly valued as an important element of branding and brand identity representation. In contrast, Thai private universities did not truly pay attention to the use of their colors in their social media adverts.

It should be noted that the scope of this study is limited to color design. Other modes of communication such as text and other visual elements (e.g., image, layout and so on) are worthwhile premises of investigation for a more comprehensive understanding. Moreover, the findings of this study only described the utilization of colors in the universities' Facebook posters. It did not assess the effectiveness of the color design and overall communication strategy of the posters. Further studies can be carried out to explore viewer's' perceptions and expectations to gain insights into the effectiveness of poster design strategies employed by both government and private universities.

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