LESSON LEARNED FROM CAMPAIGN TO PREVENT NEW SMOKERS A CASE STUDY OF A PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION IN BANGKOK

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Abstract - This research study aimed to learn lessons from campaigns to prevent new smokers by using a case study of a private higher education institution in Bangkok. The researcher hoped to understand the implementation of the campaign to prevent new smokers in higher education institutions. In addition, the researcher abled to take the information and applied it to drive a campaign to prevent new smokers in the future. The researcher used a qualitative research methodology of in-depth interviews with five senior executives of student affairs and academic departments and another six students from higher education institutions.

The research results showed that higher education institutions had policies to prevent new smokers. The first was setting up a smoking area to separate students who smoked from students who were non-smokers. The second was having ongoing campaign activities every year. The third was having formal and informal communication processes through various channels to drive this policy into practice. However, personnel and students were the most likely to not be aware of the goals and progress of the campaign. In second place, personnel and students were unaware that smoking is dangerous. The point of view of personnel and students was that previous campaigns could not change the behavior of smokers. On the other hand, this was a reflection of a major problem in the area of higher education institutions as a "Sender" in the communication process to prevent new smokers who were in a "defensive" state rather than acting proactively. Therefore, it was necessary to develop a communication process to persuade and aimed for effectiveness in preventing new smokers in any higher education institution. It needed to start by making the whole society see the big picture and the goals of preventing new smokers, then created the participation of personnel and stakeholders, which laid a strong foundation for further communication.

I. INTRODUCTION

Tobacco is an agricultural product that has been developed into an industrial product with a high market value and that generates substantial profits for the government. To promote the cultivation of tobacco as an agricultural product is to lead production and generate income both directly and indirectly for the government sector, entrepreneurs, and all stakeholders, which happens in every country around the world. Communication is an important tool for driving agriculture knowledge, and product processing knowledge. Then, using communication as a channel, induce smoking behavior with confidence and persuade it to become a product that connects with the personality of a new generation. At the time of persuasion, health effects do not study, but the economic impact is ongoing. It becomes income in the form of taxes allocated to the annual government statement of expenditure (SongkiatPiyaka, 2004). Chronic diseases are caused by health effects in smokers, and those who suffer from tobacco smoke side effects have become a major global social issue after the global death rate from emphysema, lung cancer, and ischemic heart disease. Then the huge amount of money receives from taxes and performance is spent on public health rather than income. For example, Prakit Vathesatogkit(2008) found that the number of people's health affected by the effects of smoking was as high as 40,000 million baht per year.

Preventing, suppressing, and encouraging people to stop smoking is intended to be a project for driving development by using various forms of communication to reach as many people as possible. The government sector, the private sector, and various independent organizations apply the campaign process as the main means of communicating with people to change their behavior. The campaign model uses famous people who are accepted and respected in society for doing public relations. The media used in public relations use various media.There is also a campaign organizing various types of activities to create a social drive to change smoking concretely. In addition to the social drive campaign, the government also uses to have a policy about printing cigarette packs to look scary, such as using pictures of patients with chronic diseases are caused by smoking. There are also restrictions on the ability of young people to buy cigarettes, as well as a prohibition on selling separate cigarettes to prevent easy access to cigarettes for young people. Moreover, cigarettes sell in

convenience stores and shopping malls must be stored tightly close and not display for sale.

However, according to data from the Thai Health Promotion Foundation (2021), the number of new smokers are increased by 200,000 per year between the ages of 19 and 24, and the tendency of the first-time smoker decreased with age from 16.9 to 15.6 years. For every 10 new smokers who are addicted to cigarettes, only three are able to quit, but seven will remain addicted for life.

This information is inconsistent with the ongoing measures, regulations, prohibitions, and campaigns. For this reason, the researcher will apply the lessons learned from the campaign for the prevention of new smokers by using case studies in a private higher education institution in Bangkok, which aims to be able to understand the operations relate to the campaign to prevent new smokers in higher education institutions and then be able to apply that information to driving a campaign planning to prevent new smokers in the future.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research study used a qualitative research methodology of in-depth interviews to take lessons learned from the campaign to prevent new smokers using a case study of a private higher education institution in Bangkok, which had the following target groups and processes as below:

Study Area

The researcher selected a specific area in purposive sampling by setting the criteria for selecting the area as follows;

- Being a higher education institution in both the public and private sectors that had an undergraduate level. Because the target group of this research was people aged 19 to 24 who were in the process of earning a bachelor's degree.
- The study area allowed researchers to enter the area and carry out the research until the process was completed.
- Administrators and faculty members were interested in and cooperate in conducting research.

In this regard, there was an administrator of a private higher education institution in Bangkok who allowed researchers to enter the area to conduct research. Information related to cigarettes were sensitive. Therefore, in order to meet the requirements of the Human Research Ethics Committee, the researcher abled to disclose the name or any other information that could be linked to this higher education institution.

Key informant

Referring to information from Jamnean Joungtrakul(2018), it indicated that the number of the target group proposed by qualitative research scholars according to the strategic research in the form of a case study was at least six people. Therefore, the researcher selected informants in the form of Purposive Sampling which was one person per department of senior executives in student affairs and academic affairs then using the Snowball Sampling method to add three more people for a total of five students. For the part of the student, the researcher randomly selected key informants (Accidental Sampling) from six students at random who were smoking at the institution's designated area and willing to provide information. Therefore, there were eleven key informants for both parts according to the specified criteria.

Research Instruments

The researcher designed a semi-structural interview form that contained a number of specific questions to be answered. At the same time, the researcher also allowed informants to express more opinions to create a deeper understanding that all questions were open-ended. The researcher would collect the interview data by himself using the methods of taking notes, making sound recordings, or conducting an online interview at the informant's convenience.

Ethical considerations in human research

This research was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of Naresuan University, Science, Technology, Humanities, and Social Sciences of Certificate No. P2-0274/2564 dated October 18, 2021.

III. RESEARCH RESULT

1. The general state of campaigning in higher education institutions

The characteristics of the main informants were: eleven people, five of whom were female and six of whom were male; one graduated with a doctorate, four with a master's degree, and six were in the process of studying for a bachelor's degree.

Informant ID	Gender	Education	Position	Affiliation
UL01	Female	Master degree	Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs and head of a department	Faculty/College
UL02	Female	Master degree	Director of the health center	Student affair
UL03	Male	Master degree	Director of Student Affairs	Student affair
UL04	Female	Doctorate degree	Director of the Academic Office	Standards and Educational Service Group
UL05	Female	Master degree	Assistant Dean for Student Affairs	Faculty/College
1st Student	Male	Bachelor degree	2nd-year student	Faculty/College
2nd Student	Male	Bachelor degree	2nd-year student	Faculty/College
3rd Student	Male	Bachelor degree	2nd-year student	Faculty/College
4th Student	Female	Bachelor degree	2nd-year student	Faculty/College
5th Student	Male	Bachelor degree	2nd-year student	Faculty/College
6th Student	Male	Bachelor degree	2nd-year student	Faculty/College

Data from in-depth interviews with five senior executives of student affairs and academic departments found that this higher education institution had a policy related to the prevention of new smokers for more than ten years, which included a campaign to prevent new smokers and activities to reduce smoking among students continuously every academic year, as well as being a representative of a network in higher education institutions to prevent drug abuse in the area.

*"...*The university had been doing campaigns and public relations continuously. Moreover, we had a counseling center to consult about reducing, or quitting smoking, or providing information about smoking addiction. We had worked with student clubs, game competitions, and walking campaigns of all faculties. Then we brought them to see a terrible sight regularly or the walking project of student affairs. When I walked along the buildings and saw someone smoking, I would call to warn him that smoking was your right, but your rights must be within the framework, such as staying in the designated place and not affecting other people*..."*

*(*Informant ID UL03*)*

*"...*The university had established a project... which included many cases. We would take care of safety, services, drugs, vices, gambling, and quarrels. All of them would have committees, agencies, and external agencies, such as district representatives and community representatives, come in*...."*

*(*Informant ID UL05*)*

Higher education institutions focused on preventing and reducing the number of smokers in the area. The student affairs administration committee was established, consisting of the vice president, assistant dean for student affairs from all faculties, and executives of all support departments in the institution. They had the authority to consider the direction of student development and consider the budget received from the institution to develop students for maximum benefits, oversee the budget for other activities and missions, supervise educational quality assurance in accordance with national higher education standards, promote and support the organization's activities which added value for students by developing their abilities according to their aptitudes. The meeting was scheduled to be held every month to supervise, monitor the operations, and clarify information about policies, measuresand relevant news to all committees for acknowledgement and practice. It could be seen that the communications of higher education institutions were official communications with an emphasis on communication through commands, institute announcements, and communication at monthly meetings, which did not focus specifically on cigarettes and new smokers.

*"...*We worked together. There was a meeting of the student affairs committee in all faculties, all colleges, all departments, buildings, public relations and funds. We had it all here, including the club, but how to manage each faculty would be different, excepted for the big drug campaign. Moreover, we had a university representative who would pick up the policy and bring it to transmit. There would be a board meeting every month which Health Center would inform to know some and continuing*..."*

*(*Informant ID UL03*)*

Media design and the choice of language for communication within organizations and external communications in higher education institutions were the sole responsibility of the public relations office. Therefore, if the student affairs group needed to design or produce media for public relations and campaigns to prevent new smokers in the institution, they must be sent official information via email or an e-document system for the public relations office to produce media only. They were unable to design or create media on their own in order to ensure that communication was directed in the same direction throughout the institution.

*"...*To design media, it had to be sent to public relations, which could not come out by itself. There was a time when we did it ourselves. He saw that it was not the same image. Someone made a cartoon. Someone made Thai costumes. Therefore, everybody had to send the public relations department to do it to make it come out with the same image*..."*

*(*Informant ID UL02*)*

2. Problems encountered from driving campaign projects in higher education institutions

Content analysis data from in-depth interviews (Table 2) found that personnel and students were mostly unaware of the goals and progress of the campaign. Next, personnel and students were unaware of the dangers of smoking, and they viewed that past campaigns could not change their behaviors, respectively.

Some information from academic administrators reflected that organizing activities or campaigns to prevent new smokers in higher education institutions was a direct workload of the student affairs group. As a result, the academic department could not know the details and could not participate in driving the campaign, which included planning, carrying out activities, tracking activity results, and knowing the number of new smokers in the institution, as well as the details of policies or goals related to new smokers in the institution.

*"...*Honestly, I still did not know what they did and what you did, or how effective it was at solving the problem of smoking in the area. Nobody had ever told me. I may be on the academic side as well, but this was related to student affairs*..."*

*(*Informant ID UL01*)*

*"...*I saw that they had campaigns every year during World No-Tobacco Day. The student affairs department would be reported at meetings. It would be a matter for me to know. As for asking for participation in the campaign, I must answer directly that there was hardly ever anyone who joined the campaign due to academic task workload. Moreover, it was the responsibility of his side*..."*

*(*Informant ID UL04*)*

In addition, data from in-depth interviews with another six students at the higher education institution revealed that some students had started smoking since middle school. They learned about cigarettes through a friend's recommendation. Students had a good understanding of the dangers and harms of smoking. On the other hand, they were not afraid of warnings or pictures on cigarette packs. They also were not affected by rising cigarette prices because students could buy imported cigarettes that were tax-free and cheaper than normal cigarettes from friends who smoked through the Line group channel.

*"...*We knew that it already had. We accepted what it will be. No matter how scary the picture was, I smoked*..."*

*(*Interviewed 1st Student*)*

*"...*Ajarn, imported cigarettes price was cheaper, which was not more than 50 baht per pack. You could find a lot of LINE groups or let friends buy them. It was not fake. It was tax evasion. If the cigarette price were up to 100 or 200 USD per pack, I would go and buy these. It still had*..."*

*(*Interviewed 2nd Student*)*

Many students also participated in the campaign to prevent new smokers at the institution. The students thought that if I recommended others to smoke, I wouldn't recommend it myself.

On the other hand, I would not forbid them if my friend wanted to try. Because smoking was an individual need. It could not be 100% prevented. Smoking had already been tried, or people wanted to quit or continue to smoke. It was an individual decision. Everyone had their own reasons despite their knowledge that smoking was harmful to their health.

*"...*I was the one who made posters and signboards. I was a school athlete and teacher. I had done all activities. But if you asked me if I smoke or not, I would say no. I accepted that I smoked. You could ask anyone about it. Those holding the signboards of the university, all of them were smokers. All campaigns with signboards would not help to prevent smoking. People who did not smoke would not smoke even if you put the cigarette in their mouth... Those who smoked, on the other hand, would buy it even if it cost 200 USD per pack*..."*

*(*Interviewed 3rd Student*)*

*"...*Cigarettes depended on the person, teacher. If you let me recommend it, I would not recommend it. But if friends wanted to try it, I would not forbid them to try. It was something need to try by themselves. If they did not like it, they would stop by themselves. If someone forbids to smoke it, theywould smoke it anyway*..."*

*(*Interviewed 4th Student*)*

*"...*But I thought that if the university would like to do something, they shouldmanage the smokers to live in their area. It should help to reduce the number of new smokers. Then it should reduce the number of non-smokersto smell smoke. On the other hand,it could not be forced. When the teacher came, I would run away. When the teacher turned away, I continued to smoke*..."*

*(*Interviewed 5th Student*)*

IV. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Teenage students are in a time that requires social acceptance. They often spend time with friends. Therefore, the use of this factor in communication design is a challenge for every agency in society, from families, schools, and higher education institutions to relevant networks in the government, private, and civil society sectors. That must be strengthened to occur at the "individual" level, not to bend according to the "right" values in the group of friends. But it is the "wrong" value for people outside society. Students join the walking campaign, and holding signboards may not be attractive and be insufficient to strengthen the ideals of society (PhongsriSrimoragot and RungnapaPanitrat, 2005; PranotKaochim, 2006).

However, according to data from the Thai Health Promotion Foundation (2021), it was found that the number of new smokers increased by about 200,000 per year and were between the ages of 19 and 24 years old, counting new smokers at that age. Most of them stayed in higher education institutions. On the other hand, the research study found that higher education institutions had policies to prevent new smokers by setting up a smoking area to separate students who smoke and non-smokers. There were ongoing campaign activities every year. There were formal and informal communications through various channels to drive policies into action. However, personnel in the academic department still lacked participation at all levels. Moreover, the students still had a positive attitude toward smoking. The data reflected a critical problem in the higher education institution as a "Sender". The communication process to prevent new smokers became "defensive" rather than proactive. The higher education institutions where researchers could enter the area to develop social innovations had several limitations that could not be fully addressed in preventing new smokers. As a result, a messenger was a strength when comparing higher education institutions and cigarette manufacturers. There was a clear difference. Therefore, the development of persuasive communication and the goal of effectiveness in preventing new smokers in this model of higher education institutions. It was necessary to start by making the whole society see the picture and recognize the importance of preventing new smokers. Each party participated in expressing opinions to

create change at the policy level. It laid a strong foundation, build thinking power and attracted the recipients to recognize, understand, and conform until behavior changes were in accordance with the principle of persuasive communication (PanidaJongsuksomsakul, 2021).

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