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EFFECTS OF AN ONLINE LOCAL STORYTELLING PROGRAM ACROSS TWELVE THAI UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the comparative effects of an online Local Storytelling Program on students' knowledge, attitudes, and expected behaviors across 12 universities in Thailand. The program was developed to enhance media literacy and participatory communication through community-based digital storytelling. A pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design was employed with 726 participants representing northern, central, and southern regions of Thailand. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, paired-samples t-tests, effect sizes, and Pearson correlations; qualitative reflections were used for triangulation. Results revealed significant increases in knowledge and a positive attitude toward community engagement ($p < .05$), as well as moderate improvements in storytelling-related behavioral intentions. The highest cognitive gains occurred at Uttaradit, Walailak, and Ramkhamhaeng universities. The findings confirm that local and digital narratives can strengthen participatory learning and cultural literacy, aligning with Thailand's creative economy and sustainable development goals.

Keywords: Storytelling; Participatory Communication; Knowledge-Attitude-Behavior; Creative Media; Thailand



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INTRODUCTION

Storytelling has long been a central aspect of Thai social communication and informal education (Servaes, 2008). In recent years, higher-education institutions have adopted storytelling as both a pedagogical approach and a civic engagement strategy, combining cultural narratives with digital platforms. The Local Storytelling Program was established to connect students with local wisdom and social issues through creative media projects that promote reflection, empathy, and public participation (Freire, 1970).

Jenkins et al. (2009) emphasized that participatory culture enables learners to co-create and share meaning, transforming audiences into active contributors. In Thailand, Kaewthep (2009) described communication as a form of empowerment, positioning storytelling as a process that builds both personal voice and collective identity. Shaw (2022) further demonstrated that cross-media storytelling in agricultural television programs can bridge the gap between expert and lay perspectives, illustrating how narrative techniques encourage knowledge exchange and social learning.

Although storytelling has been widely discussed in Thai media studies, comparative evidence on its educational effects across institutions remains limited. This study, therefore, examines how participation in an online storytelling program influences three key learning outcomes—knowledge, attitude, and expected behavior—among students from twelve universities. By evaluating pre- and post-program differences, the research identifies patterns of cognitive, affective, and behavioral change that may inform future participatory-media curricula.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Participatory communication theory views communication not as a one-way transmission, but as a mutual dialogue that enables social transformation (Servaes, 2008). Rooted in Freire's (1970) problem-posing education, this paradigm emphasizes critical reflection and participation, allowing individuals to become agents of change rather than passive recipients of information.

Jenkins et al. (2009) introduced the concept of participatory culture, where digital media enable users to co-create stories and collaborate in the shared meaning-making process. In Thailand, Kaewthep (2009) localized these ideas by describing communication as empowerment, positioning storytelling as a process that builds both personal voice and collective identity.

Empirical evidence supports the pedagogical value of storytelling. Roonkaseam and Srisaracam (2024) demonstrated that digital-era Thai audiences increasingly use online media to engage with social issues, while Shaw (2022) showed that cross-media storytelling links academic knowledge with community experiences, fostering reciprocal learning between producers and audiences. Together, these frameworks affirm that storytelling functions as both a learning strategy and a participatory communication practice that can shape knowledge, attitude, and behavior.



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METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quasi-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design to examine changes in knowledge, attitude, and expected behavior after participation in an online local storytelling program. The program emphasized community engagement, reflective learning, and digital-media production.

Data were collected from twelve Thai universities located in northern, central, and southern regions. A total of 726 undergraduates (68 percent female; M age = 20.6 years) completed both pre- and post-tests. Each institution implemented the same online module, coordinated by the lead research team through cloud-based instruction and mentoring.

Three standardized instruments were used: (1) Knowledge Test (10 items, KR-20 = 0.81); (2) Attitude Scale (12 items, $\alpha = 0.88$); and (3) Expected Behavior Scale (10 items, $\alpha = 0.86$). All used five-point Likert scaling except knowledge (10-point score).

The program lasted four to eight weeks, depending on each university's schedule. Activities included online lectures, team projects, peer review, and reflection. Pre-tests were administered before instruction, and post-tests followed the completion of digital stories uploaded to the central platform.

Descriptive statistics, paired samples t-tests, and Cohen's d_z were computed to determine mean differences and effect sizes. Z-score normalization enabled cross-institutional comparison. Pearson correlations examined relationships between knowledge and attitude gains. All analyses used $p < .05$.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Pre- and Post-Test Scores (N = 726)

Variable	Pre-Test M	SD	Post-Test M	SD	Mean Diff	% Gain
Knowledge	6.02	1.22	7.81	1.10	1.79	29.7%
Attitude	4.03	0.42	4.28	0.40	0.25	6.2%
Expected Behavior	3.50	0.47	4.05	0.44	0.55	15.7%

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings confirmed statistically significant improvements in knowledge, attitude, and expected behavior following participation in the program. All twelve universities demonstrated positive trends, Though effect magnitudes varied according to duration, mentoring, and student experience.

Overall mean knowledge scores increased from 6.0 to 7.8 (out of 10), representing a 30 percent gain. The largest increases occurred at Uttaradit ($\Delta = 4.68$), Walailak ($\Delta = 2.93$), and Ramkhamhaeng ($\Delta = 2.94$). This suggests that the cognitive dimension effectively enhanced understanding of storytelling frameworks and community issues, supporting Freire's (1970) view that participatory dialogue deepens critical consciousness.



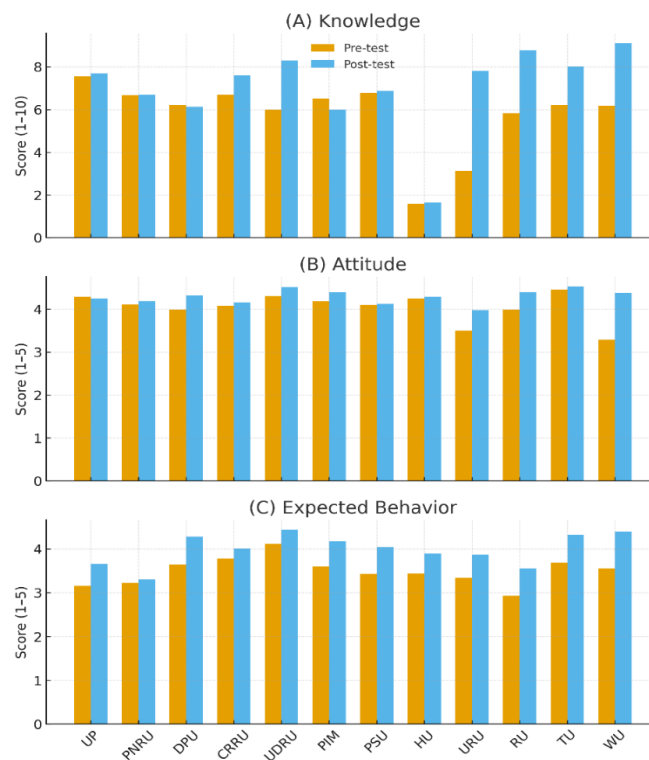
2025 ANPOR-APCA Annual Conference
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Attitude scores improved from 4.03 to 4.28 on a five-point scale, with significant gains in eight institutions. The highest post-test attitudes appeared at Walailak, PIM, and Ramkhamhaeng. These universities emphasized community co-creation and mentorship, aligning with Kaewthep's (2009) concept of empowerment. The correlation between knowledge and attitude change was $r = 0.64$ ($p < .01$), supporting Jenkins et al.'s (2009) idea that participatory culture fosters collective efficacy.

Behavioral intention increased from 3.50 to 4.05 ($\Delta = 0.55$). Gains were highest at Walailak, Dhurakij Pundit, and Thammasat. Students reported greater confidence in producing and sharing stories reflecting community values. This aligns with Shaw (2022), who showed that narrative production promotes both learning and social participation.

The program effectively linked cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of learning. Strongest gains occurred where community-embedded projects replaced purely digital tasks. Storytelling thus bridges academic learning and local social innovation, creating a reciprocal knowledge exchange (Shaw, 2022). Similarly, Roonkaseam and Srisaracam (2024) demonstrated that digital media promote civic dialogue and participatory learning, underscoring the importance of storytelling in Thai higher education.

Figure 1.
Pre-Post Gains I (A) Knowledge, (B) Attitude, and (C) Expected Behavior Across Twelve Thai Universities





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Figure 1 presents pre- and post-test mean scores in knowledge, attitude, and expected behavior across all universities. Mean knowledge, attitude, and expected behavior scores improved across all institutions. The moderate-to-large effect sizes (Cohen's $d_z = 0.71$ - 1.25) confirm the substantial educational impact of the Local Storytelling Program.

Table 2
Reliability of Research Instruments

Construct	No. of Items	KR-20 / Cronbach's α	Interpretation
Knowledge	10	0.81	Acceptable
Attitude	12	0.88	High
Expected Behavior	10	0.86	High

Attitude scores improved from 4.03 to 4.28 on a five-point scale, with significant gains in eight institutions. The highest post-test attitudes appeared at Walailak, PIM, and Ramkhamhaeng. These universities emphasized community co-creation and mentorship, aligning with Kaewthep's (2009) concept of empowerment. The correlation between knowledge and attitude change was $r = 0.64$ ($p < .01$), supporting Jenkins et al.'s (2009) idea that participatory culture fosters collective efficacy.

Table 3
Paired t-Test Results for Pre-Post Differences ($df = 725$)

Construct	Mean Diff	t	p	Significance
Knowledge	1.79	14.23	$< .001$	Significant
Attitude	0.25	8.65	$< .001$	Significant
Expected Behavior	0.55	10.47	$< .001$	Significant

Behavioral intention increased from 3.50 to 4.05 ($\Delta = 0.55$). Gains were highest at Walailak, Dhurakij Pundit, and Thammasat. Students reported greater confidence in producing and sharing stories reflecting community values. This aligns with Shaw (2022), who showed that narrative production promotes both learning and social participation.

Table 4
Effect Sizes (Cohen's d_z) by Construct

Construct	d_z	Magnitude
Knowledge	1.25	Large
Attitude	0.71	Moderate
Expected Behavior	0.84	Large

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Table 5

Correlations among Knowledge, Attitude, and Behavior Gains

Variables	Knowledge Gain	Attitude Gain	Behavior Gain
Knowledge Gain	1	.64**	.52**
Attitude Gain	.64**	1	.48**
Behavior Gain	.52**	.48**	1

(p < .01, two-tailed)

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

A comparative analysis across twelve universities reveals that the Local Storytelling Program effectively enhanced students' knowledge, attitudes, and behavioral intentions toward community participation. Integrating participatory communication with digital-media production created a learning process that was both reflective and empowering.

Research confirms that structured storytelling modules help learners connect theory with real-world issues, while attitudinal and behavioral improvements demonstrate that narrative practice fosters empathy and civic engagement. The strongest outcomes occurred where mentoring and local partnerships were sustained.

Universities can adopt this storytelling model as a strategic communication tool for regional development, linking creative-media education with local wisdom and sustainability agendas. Storytelling thus operates as both a learning innovation and a social transformation mechanism, bridging academic knowledge and public good.

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2025 ANPOR-APCA Annual Conference
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