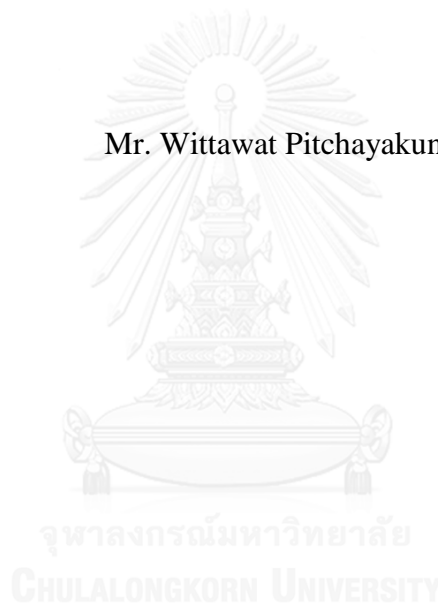


IDEAL LIFESTYLES OF YOUNG THAI URBANITES
IN PRESENT-DAY BANGKOK: AN ANALYSIS OF ADVERTISEMENTS
OF PRODUCTS AND SERVICES IN THE *M2F* FREE-
DISTRIBUTION NEWSPAPER

Mr. Wittawat Pitchayakun



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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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รูปแบบการใช้ชีวิตในอุดมคติของกลุ่มคนเมืองรุ่นใหม่ในกรุงเทพฯปัจจุบัน: การวิเคราะห์โฆษณา
ของสินค้าและบริการในหนังสือพิมพ์แจกฟรี เอ็มทูเอฟ



วิทยานิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญาอักษรศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต
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วิทวัส พิษณุกุล : รูปแบบการใช้ชีวิตในอุดมคติของกลุ่มคนเมืองรุ่นใหม่ในกรุงเทพฯ
 ปัจจุบัน: การวิเคราะห์โฆษณาของสินค้าและบริการในหนังสือพิมพ์แจกฟรี *เอ็มทูเอฟ*
 (IDEAL LIFESTYLES OF YOUNG THAI URBANITES IN PRESENT-DAY BANGKOK: AN ANALYSIS OF ADVERTISEMENTS OF PRODUCTS AND SERVICES IN THE M2F FREE-DISTRIBUTION NEWSPAPER) อ.ที่ปริกษาวิทยานิพนธ์หลัก: ผศ. ดร. วาสนา วงศ์สุวรรณ, หน้า.

งานวิจัยนี้มุ่งศึกษาอิทธิพลของโฆษณาสินค้าและบริการในหนังสือพิมพ์แจกฟรีเอ็มทูเอฟ ซึ่งมีผลต่อมุมมองรูปแบบการใช้ชีวิตในอุดมคติของกลุ่มคนเมืองรุ่นใหม่ในกรุงเทพฯ ยุคปัจจุบัน งานวิจัยนี้เป็นงานวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพซึ่งใช้ระเบียบวิธีวิจัยหลักที่สำคัญ 2 ประการ ได้แก่ การสัมภาษณ์แบบเจาะลึกผู้อ่านหนังสือพิมพ์แจกฟรีเอ็มทูเอฟเป็นประจำ และการวิเคราะห์โฆษณาที่ลงหน้าหนึ่งของหนังสือพิมพ์ดังกล่าว ผลการวิจัยบ่งชี้ว่ากลุ่มคนเมืองรุ่นใหม่ที่อ่านเอ็มทูเอฟเล็งเห็นปัจจัยสำคัญที่ประกอบกันขึ้นเป็นรูปแบบการใช้ชีวิตในอุดมคติ 5 ประการด้วยกัน ได้แก่ (1) สุขภาพ (2) รูปร่างหน้าตา (3) ความสะดวกสบาย (4) ภาพลักษณ์ความเป็นผู้ทรงภูมิ/มีการศึกษา และ (5) ความมั่นคงทางการเงิน แม้ว่าผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์ทุกคนจะเห็นพ้องกันว่าปัจจัยทั้ง 5 ประการดังกล่าวเป็นปัจจัยสำคัญที่นำไปสู่รูปแบบการใช้ชีวิตในอุดมคติ แต่ผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์แต่ละคนก็อาจลำดับความสำคัญของปัจจัยทั้ง 5 ประการแตกต่างกันไปตามแต่ความจำเป็นของแต่ละปัจเจกบุคคลซึ่งขึ้นอยู่กับบริบททางสังคม การเมือง และเศรษฐกิจที่แตกต่างกันไปในแต่ละบุคคลด้วย

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สาขาวิชา ไทยศึกษา

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WITTAWAT PITCHAYAKUN: IDEAL LIFESTYLES OF YOUNG THAI
URBANITES IN PRESENT-DAY BANGKOK: AN ANALYSIS OF
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FREE-DISTRIBUTION NEWSPAPER. ADVISOR: ASST. PROF.
WASANA WONGSURAWAT, Ph.D., pp.

This research aims to examine the influence of products and services advertised in the *M2F* free-distribution newspaper in shaping young Thai urbanites' perception of the ideal lifestyle. The research is a qualitative study, conducted through two major methods, in-depth interview with regular readers of *M2F* and analysis of front-page advertisements. Research findings reveal five outstanding aspects of ideal lifestyles according to young Thai urbanite readers of *M2F*, which includes major concerns in the following issues, (1) health (2) physical appearance (3) comfort and convenience (4) the appearance of sophistication and (5) financial security. Though all interviewees appear to agree upon the above mentioned as the key aspects of their ideal lifestyle, they prioritize each aspect differently depending on their individual needs, which also differs owing to different socio-political and economic contexts.

Field of Study: Thai Studies

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Student's Signature

Advisor's Signature

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the research

M2F is a freely distributed, Thai language newspaper that is available in and around Bangkok (Fernquest 2011). The daily newspaper has a target circulation of 600,000 copies per day. It has been in circulation since 2011. It is distributed mainly during the morning commuting period, in BTS and MRT stations, office buildings, and at coffee shops and other commuting service areas. The main target audience is the urban professionals of Bangkok, especially those that commute in and around the city. The newspaper's content is designed to be interesting and snappy, and it has been well received in the market. M2F is not the first free newspaper distributed in Bangkok, but its predecessor (The Daily Express, launched in 2008) has ceased circulation (Newspaper Innovation 2011). M2F is the one of two freely distributed newspapers in the Bangkok market.

M2F operates on an advertising supported revenue model; in other words, rather than charging readers (and selling advertising), it reaches a much broader circulation by not charging readers, and thus can generate a higher income from advertisers (Bakker 2013). This publishing model has been shown to be viable in other areas, with many major cities now having one or more free daily, advertising-supported newspapers. Typically, free newspapers can survive even in newspaper-rich markets by providing different types of news and styles of writing, as well as aggressively targeting its readership in order to provide the best possible targeting for advertisers (Bakker 2013). Furthermore, there is evidence that most markets will only support one or two free newspapers (Bakker 2013). In general, this suggests that the ultimate success of M2F will depend on the effectiveness of its advertising targeting.

The main market of M2F target is young professional Thai urban dwellers in Bangkok. There are specific lifestyle factors that this group has, which could change the types of marketing and advertising that will be effective. For example, the group has relatively high income compared to the rest of Thailand; per capita income in

Bangkok is about three times the average income compared to the rest of Thailand (United Nations Thailand 2008). Bangkok is the cultural, financial, and economic center of Thailand, with increased opportunities for consumption of goods and services. Consumption that is seen as modern, such as mobile phones, is also part of the expression of the Thai urbanite lifestyle (Chuensumon Bunnag 2006). This type of consumption is tied to expression of increased income and social class, and is an important part of social and status expression as well as availability of leisure time and taste (Chuensumon Bunnag 2006).

Given the need to carefully focus on a target market, M2F needs to understand its audience well. This makes the lifestyle choices and factors of the targeted group very important. The newspaper's front page is the page seen by most readers, as it is available to casual glimpses as well as serious readers (Knox 2007). The front page is a combination of visual and verbal communication, as well as a site for both advertising and content. Thus, the choice of front page advertising may have the most impact on consumer decisions and choices. Studies have shown that the type of goods advertised, as well as the type of advertisement itself (emotional or non-emotional), influences the reception of the advertisement and its effectiveness in a target population (Janssens and Pelsmacker 2005). Thus, if M2F wants to be most effective in its selection of front-page advertisements, it needs to consider the impact of the products, type of advertisements, and other factors that influence the consumer's reception of the advertisements.

1.2 Problem statement

The problem this research will examine is how advertising influences the lifestyle and consumption choices of viewers in the context of a free newspaper based on M2F newspaper.

Most of the research on free newspapers is focused on the newspapers themselves, rather than on their effects on viewers of their articles or advertising. For example, this research includes detailed information about the business lifecycle of

the newspaper, which follows a typical structure of introduction, growth, stability, and decline (Bakker 2013). There is also older research on the free newspaper business model and the effectiveness of advertising support, which concludes that in most cases, the advertising-supported model will eventually fail (Bakker 2002). It is also known that most alternative strategies for free newspapers, such as detailed sports sections, premium subscriptions, and home delivery, have limited effects (Bakker 2013). This suggests that in general, the outlook for the lifecycle of free newspapers is poor, although some survive.

What is less clear is what contribution advertising effectiveness makes to the success of the newspaper. Mass media advertising success can be difficult to determine, since it often results in indirect effects (such as increased brand awareness) rather than directly in increased sales of a product or service (MacRury 2009). While larger firms may invest in approaches like consumer surveys or market monitoring in order to determine the effectiveness of advertising channels, it is unlikely that the smaller firms that may advertise in a locally distributed free newspaper would have such resources. Thus, it may be difficult for them to determine whether or not their advertising approach is working, and if increased sales are not seen they may discontinue the advertisement. However, there is no evidence in the literature that suggests a mechanism for the relationship between free newspaper advertising and consumption or lifestyle choices, making it difficult to state that such a relationship exists. Furthermore, most of the studies of free newspapers have focused on English-language or European newspapers, rather than Asian languages (such as Thai). This could make a difference because of differences in reading cultures between countries. This study will help to resolve some of these questions by examining M2F and its readers.

1.3 Research objectives

1. To study the advertisements of products and services in M2F free-distribution newspaper.
2. To analyze how ideal lifestyles of young Thai urbanites in Bangkok are reflected and projected by these advertisements.

1.4 Major arguments, perspectives, theories or hypothesis

M2F is distributed on weekday at large office buildings, BTS and MRT stations, selected commuter van and bus stops, major department stores and coffee shops with a daily circulation of over 400,000 copies. It mainly targets urban professionals, middle-income workers and students. The mixed characteristics of urbanites in Bangkok which are the focus group of the study are described as belonging to the 35-23 years of age range with a monthly income of approximately 50,000-10,000 baht. Their concerns for health, wealth and well-being lifestyle have become more popular as evidenced in the first page advertisements. While the advertisements of products and services in M2F newspaper reflect these Thai urbanites' lifestyle, this group of people tends to consume products and services they perceive as representing the desirable ideal lifestyle. The desirable lifestyle reflected by these advertisements is the life aspired by young urbanites; for example living in a modern style residence, consuming trendy food and beverage items, or managing personal finance in a smart way. The products and services frequently advertised on the cover page of M2F are condominium projects, green tea, yogurt and other health supplements, personal financial products. In addition, these products and services mostly use young and stylish presenters or pictures that depict a modern way of life.

1.5 Scope of the research

This research will examine advertisement on the front page of the M2F free newspaper, which is distributed in and around Bangkok, Thailand. The newspaper is distributed in Thai, and thus the research will also take place in Thai. Findings will be translated into English for presentation by the researcher. The research will employ a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis. It will involve interviews with young Thai-reading Bangkok residents who have experienced of reading M2F.

1.6 Research contribution

The main contribution to this research is the academic analysis of the free newspaper in the Thai setting. The free newspaper, supported by advertising, is a relatively old approach to distribution of news and information, but has had little attention in the advertising literature. However, its role in distributing information about products and services of interest to people who read it means that it is potentially important in understanding the lifestyles of readers and their consumer desires and demands. This study will aim to examine this topic in the setting of Bangkok, which is a rapidly growing urban center with increasing income and standards of living. This will make it an interesting study on the topic and increase understanding of the free newspaper as an advertising medium. Since there has been no research that has examined this topic, it will be a novel contribution (though as discussed above, somewhat limited in scope). This study will also contribute to the study of advertising in Thailand, especially vernacular or local advertising, which is also an area that has had little attention in the academic literature. It could be used to generalize findings to other developing countries, especially countries with similar cultures of literacy and advertising use.

This study could also have value for advertisers, since it will demonstrate how readers view the advertisements and whether these advertisements are actually reaching their ideal audience. By examining the opinions of Bangkok readers of M2F on whether or not the advertisements actually influence their lifestyles, the study will provide information to advertisers about how effective they actually are. This could

help them refine their messages and medium in order to better reach an intended market, as well as help them retarget their products if the current market is inappropriate.

1.7 Definition of term

Idea life style = “Idea life style” is a life style that people would like to be, not the actual life style. For example, Tom who is actually live with parents in suburb, but working in downtown. A would like to live in downtown condominium. Thus, Tom’s idea life style would be living in downtown condominium.

- In this paper, idea life style will be focused on 5 areas which are;
- Health
- Physical appearance
- Comfort and convenience
- The appearance of sophistication
- Financial security

Young = “Young” in this paper refers to young professional who is already graduated and starts working or has been working for some time.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Free newspapers

2.1.1 International overview of free newspapers

Free newspapers began to emerge in Europe and the United States in the early to mid-1990s, with the first introductions in Asia (Singapore) in 2000 (Bakker 2002). The first modern free daily newspaper, the Stockholm Metro, started publication in 1995, and by 2002 was in publication in 23 cities around the world. By 2002, there were 80 free newspapers circulating around the world, with an estimated daily circulation of 10 million (Bakker 2002). The basic business model of the free newspaper was already established by that time, including reliance on advertising and use of free or cheap distribution through local commuter transport systems (Bakker 2002). (As explained in the introduction, this is the same model M2F uses.) Most free dailies at the time were owned by major publishing houses, and used wire service and third-party heavily rather than engaging in much independent reporting (Bakker 2002).

Over the next several years, free daily newspaper circulation rose in Europe, while paid daily newspaper circulation fell (Bakker 2008). (However, Bakker (2008) argues that this has more to do with substitution of other forms of news, particularly the Internet, rather than direct substitution of free newspapers for paid newspapers.) The total number of free daily newspapers around the world also grew, although they did not all succeed (Bakker 2008). Free newspapers also have increased total circulation and newspaper readership, especially in African and Asian countries (Bakker 2011a). As of 2009, there were 13 free newspapers circulating in Asia (Bakker, 2011). They are particularly important in Hong Kong and Singapore, where they have one of the highest rates of penetration. However, at the time of this study (the most recent data available) there was as yet no free newspaper in Thailand.

2.1.2 Free newspapers in Thailand

Free newspapers are a relatively new introduction in Thailand. The Daily Express (2008) did not have a sustained publication period and is not reflected in Bakker's (2011) 2009 census of free newspapers worldwide (Newspaper Innovation 2011). This means that M2F, introduced in 2011, is the first (and so far the only) free daily newspaper in sustained distribution in Thailand (Fernquest 2011). This is why M2F is the main focus of this research. The current circulation of M2F is estimated at 600,000 copies(2013).

M2F follows a standard revenue and distribution model, including the use of the transport network as a distribution nexus and reliance on advertising for financial support (Bakker 2002) (Bakker 2013). The newspaper targets a wide range of advertisers, including consumer products, services, and restaurants among others (The Post Publishing Public Company Limited 2014). It also follows another trend in free newspapers, ownership by a large publishing firm also operating in the area (Bakker 2002). Specifically, M2F is owned and produced by the Post Publishing Company, which also publishes leading Bangkok paid daily newspaper The Bangkok Post (The Post Publishing Public Company Limited 2014). These characteristics suggest that in most ways, M2F is following an established free daily business model.

2.2 Principles of print advertising

Print advertising can be defined as advertising intended for distribution in a printed medium, such as a magazine or newspaper (Yeshin 2006). This can be contrasted to film and television advertising (designed for an audiovisual format), radio advertising (designed for a purely audio format), outdoor advertising, direct mail, and online advertising. Print advertising is typically termed mass media advertising, meaning that it is directed to a broad audience rather than being strictly limited to a particular market segment. Print advertising can consist entirely of a printed description (as in a newspaper classified advertisement), but it is more common for it to consist of a combination of text and images. Print advertising, like other advertising, is designed to inform and persuade the viewer about the product it

advertises (Yeshin 2006). The intention of advertising is not always direct persuasion toward a sale, however (Percy and Rosenbaum-Elliott 2012). Print advertising may be used to inform the viewer about the characteristics of the brand or product, or simply to increase consumer brand awareness (Percy and Rosenbaum-Elliott 2012).

2.2.1 Print advertising and persuasion

The classical model for understanding how print advertising informs and persuades the viewer is the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), proposed by Petty and Cacioppo (1986). This complex model, which is derived from social psychology, cognitive psychology, and neuroscience research, is shown in Figure 1. As a brief summary, the model states that there are two routes that communication can take to persuade the listener (Cacioppo and Petty 1986). The central route relies on provision of relevant information to the listener, and the cognitive processing of the listener in order to assess this information and its relevance. In contrast, the peripheral route relies on provision of irrelevant information, which triggers associations, heuristics or emotional responses rather than cognitive processing (Cacioppo and Petty 1986). As another author explains, “The ELM suggests that important variations in the nature of persuasion are a function of the likelihood that receivers will engage in elaboration of (that is, thinking about) information relevant to the persuasive issue (O’Keefe 2008).

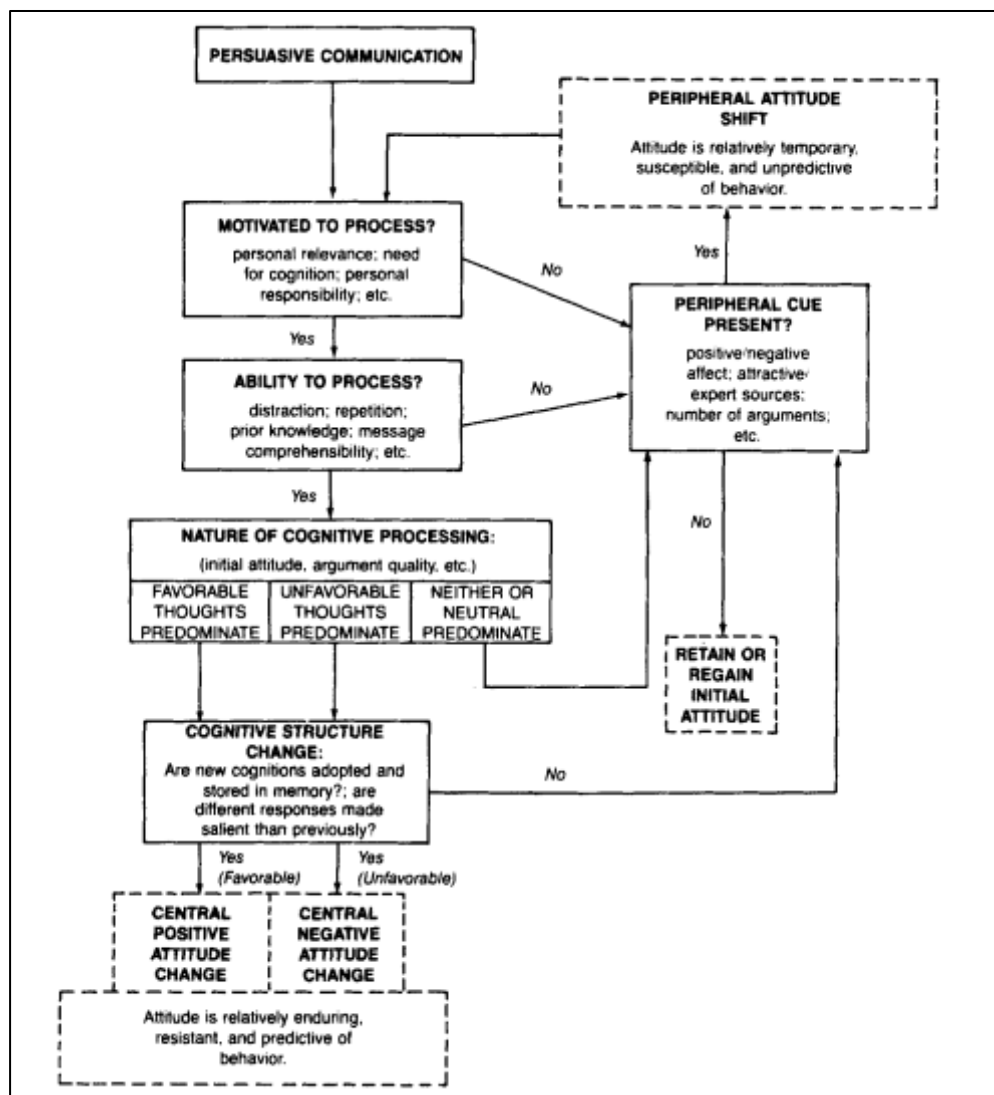


Figure 3: The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)
(Cacioppo and Petty 1986) (page 126)

Under the ELM, the characteristics of persuasive arguments that appeals are different depending on whether the communication is central route communication (cognitive) or peripheral route communication (heuristic or association-based) (O'Keefe 2008). For cognitive-route persuasion, factors that will influence how successful the communication is include the strength and quality of the information and whether it is proattitudinal (consistent with existing attitudes) or counterattitudinal (counter to existing attitudes). Communication that is good quality

(i.e. logical and sound), and that is consistent with existing attitudes, will have a positive effect on cognition. For peripheral route communications, the effectiveness of the message will be determined by how well it draws on existing heuristics or thought patterns(O'Keefe 2008). This can include, for example, the likeability heuristic (how much an individual likes the communicator), the credibility heuristic (whether the communicator is perceived as trustworthy and credible), and the consensus heuristic (where the listener is influenced by others' responses)(O'Keefe 2008). Either print or graphic elements can contain either type of information.

2.2.2 Print advertising use of language

Print advertising is characterized by the use of textual information, ranging from the minimal (such as brand name and perhaps URL) to extensive (detailed descriptions of products and functions) (Percy and Rosenbaum-Elliot 2012). In some situations, the language of print advertising may not even be the native language of the reader; for example, English may be used in print advertisements as a way to appeal to a particular social or educational demographic or to promote a global image for the brand (Hornikx, Meurs, and Boer 2010). The use of language and text in print advertising is highly contextual and its interpretation depends on the reader's culture and existing knowledge and attitudes (Percy and Rosenbaum-Elliot 2012). Culture influences the use of textual information in different ways; for example, in individualist cultures (like Great Britain), informational text is preferred and text that invokes associations is disregarded, while in collectivist cultures (like Thailand), the opposite may be true. Consumer involvement also influences the choice of text; consumers making a highly involved purchase, or one that requires a lot of cognitive processing, are likely to prefer more informational text (MacRury 2009). Demographic differences, such as age and gender of the target market, also influence how persuasive a particular text element will be.

2.2.3 Print advertising use of graphic elements

The graphic elements of print advertising include fonts (or text styles), graphic images, color, and placement and arrangement of the advertisement (Percy and Rosenbaum-Elliott 2012). In newspaper advertising, graphic elements are likely to be limited because of the limitations of newsprint technology. However, color, fonts, and images are all available to the advertiser. These elements are important because they can also be used to influence the reader, either by offering relevant information (such as images or diagrams of the product) or irrelevant information (such as pictures of spokespeople or associations with good-looking models)(Percy and Rosenbaum-Elliott 2012). Advertisers may also use more subtle cues, such as color priming, in order to persuade the viewer (Gereand and Sias 2009). For example, red (which is interpreted as a threat cue) can enhance the impact of a loss-framed persuasion message, or one that focuses on the potential loss if the action is not undertaken. In contrast, grey is interpreted as a control cue, and is more effective with gain-framed messages (Gereand and Sias 2009). Color choice can also influence whether an individual engages in cognitive processing or uses heuristics and associations when confronted with information (Mehta and Zhu 2009). Imagery used within the advertisement is commonly used to invoke specific associations (Percy and Rosenbaum-Elliott 2012). For example, a cosmetics advertisement is more likely to show an attractive woman the user imagines herself as, rather than the products themselves. These graphical images create and draw on existing associations between the product and the viewer's perceived or ideal self, which influences persuasion (Percy and Rosenbaum-Elliott 2012).

2.3 Newspaper advertisement

2.3.1 Definition

In order to understand newspaper advertisement, it is first important to define the concept of an advertisement in general. Advertising can be defined most simply as “a paid, mass-media attempt to persuade (O'Guinn, Allen, and Semenik 2012) (page 11)”. This definition identifies a number of key characteristics of the advertisement. First, it is paid; not all attempts to persuade are paid for (for example, public relations

promotions) (O'Guinn, Allen, and Semenik 2012). The second element is that it uses a mass media channel. Mass media is a media format that is not personalized and reaches a broad spectrum of people, though it may be more or less targeted (O'Guinn, Allen, and Semenik 2012). Mass media cannot reach specific people, though it can reach some groups of people (with more or less precision). Finally, it is an attempt to persuade, or convince its viewers to take a particular action (such as try a product) (O'Guinn, Allen, and Semenik 2012).

The definition of newspaper advertising is very similar to the general definition of advertising. It is a print-based form of advertising that uses print newspapers as the communication channel (Shimp and Andrews 2013). Newspapers can be understood as routine (daily, semi-weekly, or weekly), ephemeral publications that cover a variety of topics. They are more or less targeted by interest, including geographic, political, and community-based (such as university newspapers), but are intended for a wide audience (Shimp and Andrews 2013). Newspaper advertisements are intended to convince viewers to try a particular product or service, to consider a particular political view, or for another purpose (such as employment recruitment) (Shimp and Andrews 2013). Since the newspaper advertisement can run for a single day, it is often one of the most responsive and temporal forms of advertising (O'Guinn, Allen, and Semenik 2012).

2.3.2 Current trends in newspaper advertisement

Currently, newspaper advertising is on a downward trend compared to other forms of advertisement. For example, a report on the American new media showed that print advertising had fallen from \$44,939 million in 2003 to \$18,931 million in 2012 (Edmonds et al. 2013). Figure 1 shows the decline in advertising revenue over this period.

Print Ad Revenue Continues to Decline

In Billions of Dollars

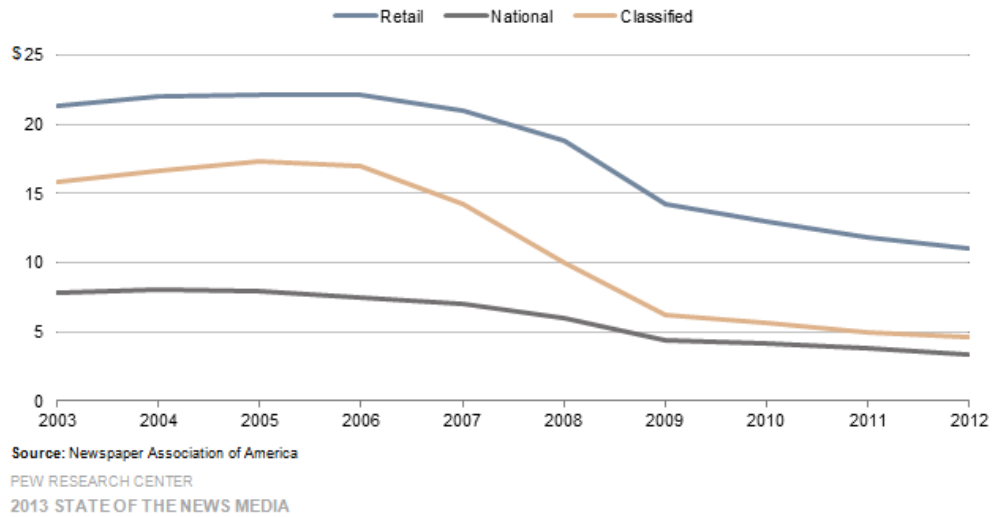
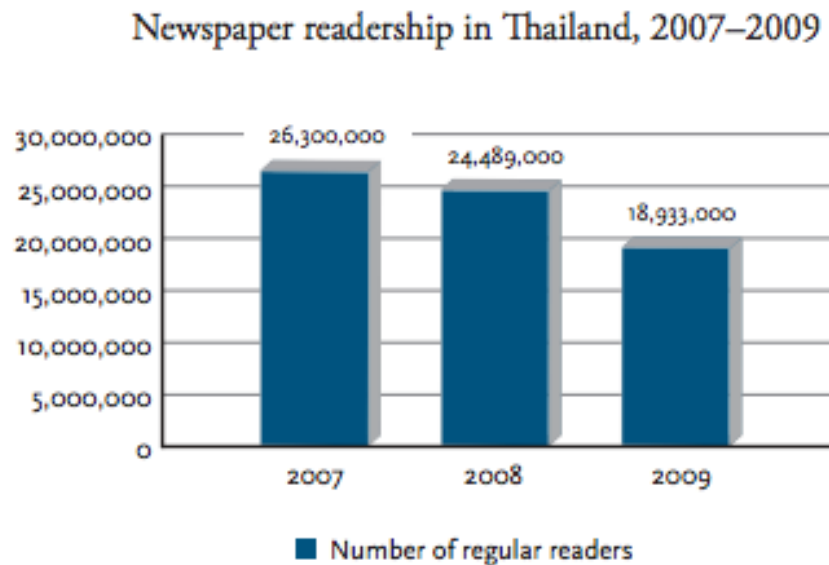


Figure 4: Print ad revenues in the US, 2003 to 2012 (Edmonds et al. 2013)

Specific statistics are difficult to determine for Thailand, although a report from one group indicates that newspaper readership and advertising revenues are falling (Somkiat Tangkitvanich and Worapoj Wongkitrungruang 2010). Figure 2 shows the decline in readership for newspapers in Thailand from 2007 to 2009. This report does not detail changes in advertising revenue, but if Thailand follows the same trend as other countries it will have fallen at a faster rate than readership.



**Figure 3: Falling newspaper readership in Thailand
(Somkiat Tangkitvanich and Worapoj Wongkitrungruang 2010)**

This trend can in part be traced to a transition of newspaper readers (especially younger readers) to other forms of media, especially online news, which fills many of the same requirements for the reader (Bakker 2011b). The reduction in circulation has led to newspaper advertising being less important because it can reach fewer viewers. Additionally, newspaper readers are increasingly aging (Shimp and Andrews 2013). Thus, much of this downward trend is related to shifting demographics and behaviors of groups that were previously newspaper readers. This is supported in Thailand by findings that show that newspaper readers have shifted to new media (Somkiat Tangkitvanich and Worapoj Wongkitrungruang 2010). However, this is not the full story, as the comparison of print advertising losses to digital gains shows (Edmonds et al. 2013). The 15-to-1 loss-to-gain ratio suggests there are other factors than simple replacement at work.

2.3.3 Types of newspaper advertisement

There are a number of types of newspaper advertisements, which are used for different reasons and by different types of advertisements (O'Guinn, Allen, and Semenik 2012). These include:

- Classified advertising: text-only, brief advertisements used for job advertisements and by individuals for purposes such as small sales.
- Insert advertising: inclusion of a full-color, printed insert into the newspaper, used for services or goods (for example, for offering coupons).
- Display advertising: a print advertisement that includes a combination of text or images, in order to advertise a particular product, service, retail location, etc. This may be in color or black and white, depending on the newspaper.

Newspaper advertisements may be placed throughout the paper, including on the front page (either directly printed or as part of a wrapper), throughout the newspaper, or in special advertising sections (O'Guinn, Allen, and Semenik 2012). Newspaper advertisements are sold by area, either by lines (for classified advertising) or fraction of a page (for display advertising). Typically, the cost of the advertisement will depend on its placement, color, graphics, and size, as well as special requirements (such as inserts or wraps). For newspapers with wide distribution areas, there may be different costs for advertising in different markets.

2.3.4 Strengths and weaknesses of newspaper advertisement

There are a number of strengths of newspaper advertisement that make them worth considering as an advertising form (Shimp and Andrews 2013). One advantage is that the position as *news* means that advertisements of events (such as store openings, product sales, and so on) are consistent with the reader's mental state. Newspaper advertisements also offer inexpensive and flexible mass distribution of advertisements, which is often very helpful for local advertisers. Newspaper

advertisements are also timely, allowing them to react and respond to immediate events as well as offer information about these events. Finally, newspaper advertisements can offer detailed information to consumers (Shimp and Andrews 2013).

There are also limitations. Some of these are related to general trends in newspapers, such as changing and declining readership and poorly targeted and unselective advertising (Shimp and Andrews 2013). Others are related to the technical implementation and design of the newspaper itself, such as poor reproduction quality (especially for image-based advertisements) and visual clutter, which can make the advertisement hard to notice (Shimp and Andrews 2013). Finally, there is a tradeoff between flexibility and cost, with intermittent advertising being more expensive than routine advertising (Shimp and Andrews 2013).

2.4 Front-page advertising

Newspaper front-page advertising refers to display advertisements placed on the front page of the newspaper (typically below the fold), either directly printed within the page or as a wrapper around the newspaper (Shimp and Andrews 2013). Front-page advertising is a relatively new introduction to newspapers, as prior to the 1980s or 1990s the front page was considered to be for serious news (Pardun 2013). Major newspapers in the US and globally routinely offer front-page advertising for a premium price (although not all newspapers do) (Pardun 2013). This research is based on the observation of front-page advertising, both for M2F and generally in Thai newspapers. According to a 2008 study, newspapers owned by publicly traded groups were more likely to use front-page advertisement than privately owned or small groups (Lee and Irby 2008).

The use of front-page advertising can be controversial because it is an area of news media that was previously reserved for non-advertising content (Pardun 2013). This was based on a need to maintain the image of the newspaper as the source of serious news as well as avoiding the perception of undue influence from advertisers on the news that is selected. This is reflected in the attitudes of newspaper professionals, as newsroom professionals are more likely to reject front-page

advertising than marketing or advertising professionals (Lee and Irby 2008). However, there is little evidence that viewers actually object to the practice of front-page advertising; as Pardun (2013) notes, advertising figures for major newspapers in the US that introduced front-page advertising have been unaffected.

In summary, front-page advertising is not yet ubiquitous, although it is commonly used (or at least considered) especially in large publicly traded news firms. It is also viewed skeptically by news professionals, although positively by marketers and neutrally by consumers.

2.4.1 Advantages and disadvantages of front-page advertising

There are a number of advantages to advertisers for front-page advertising (Pardun 2013). One of the most obvious is exposure, since the advertisement will be exposed even to casual browsers, extending its reach. Another advantage is that the front page implies credibility to the reader, as the front page makes a statement about acceptance by the editorial staff. However, the visual distinction of the advertisement from the content, as well as the different material, means that viewers do not generally confuse the advertisement with editorial or news content (Pardun 2013). Thus, the front-page advertisement gains an air of credibility and a broad reach, without triggering disbelief or cynicism about inappropriate placement.

There are some disadvantages to front-page advertising. One of these disadvantages is that the newspaper may place advertisements only below the fold, which means that casual viewers may not see it (Pardun 2013). There are also content problems. If the content is too close to news or editorial content, it will be criticized for attempting to present itself as news (Pardun 2013). The front page is also often the most expensive place to advertise in the newspaper, and newspapers may make it even more expensive by using wraps or covers, rather than printing directly on the front page (Pardun 2013). In the long term, extensive use of front-page advertising can reduce the credibility of the newspaper (Givens 2007). In that case, readers can begin to perceive the newspaper as being primarily an advertising vehicle rather than a credible news source. This can reduce the efficacy of the advertisement placed with

the newspaper as well as its circulation, though not always (Givens 2007). This is one of the reasons that newsroom professionals do not necessarily support front-page ads (Lee and Irby 2008).

2.5 Lifestyle of young Thai urbanites

The demographic of interest in this research is young Thai residents of Bangkok (urbanites). Bangkok is a significant urban migration center and draws young workers from around the country in a number of different industries and demographics (United Nations Thailand 2008). There are likely to be significant differences between these groups, but they are also likely to share psychographic characteristics. This section summarizes the evidence available on behavior, norms and beliefs, culture, and trends of young Thai urbanites. There is little academic research in this area, and as a result most sources are drawn from popular press. However, it should be kept in mind that there is little definitive information about this population segment, which is likely to be highly diverse.

2.5.1 Behavior

One behavior that is known to differentiate Bangkok urbanites from other areas of Thailand is eating habits (Chulanee Thianthai 2003). Specifically, people that live in Bangkok have access to, and eat, cuisine from a wide variety of cultures, while outside Bangkok most food is traditional Thai or Chinese food. There are also changes to Thai food as it has become more Westernized, with increased reliance on sugar and carbohydrates and other changes (Chulanee Thianthai 2003). These changes are accompanied by changes in the perception of food as being clean/dirty or healthy/not healthy; thus, behavior and norms and beliefs in this area are tied together. It is also much more common for people in Bangkok to eat in restaurants (Chulanee Thianthai 2003). Another shared behavior is that Thai urbanites are likely to commute to work rather than working at or close to home (Ratchapan Choiejit). The rapid urbanization of Bangkok means that many of the residential areas are actually somewhat outside the city, while a lot of commercial business (especially for professional industries) is located in the center. This means that there are a large

number of daily commuters on Bangkok's public transport systems, including the MRT and BTS (Ratchapan Choiejit). This is the most common shared behavioral characteristic of M2F readers, since the main distribution point of the newspaper is through the transport network (The Post Publishing Public Company Limited 2014). Thus, this is the only behavior that can be assumed to be truly shared in the interest group.

2.5.2 Norms and beliefs

Since the Thai urbanite population is diverse, it is difficult to make any statement about norms and beliefs. However, there are some general statements that can be made. Urban Thai dwellers, especially younger ones, are likely to be influenced by Western media in areas like body image and consumerism (Chulanee Thianthai 2003). This is reflected in norms that drive women to be thinner (and sometimes to adopt unhealthy eating practices as a result) (Chulanee Thianthai 2003). In general, Thai people also have a high belief in spirits and magic, which reflects an earlier animistic belief system that was in place prior to Buddhism (Ehrlich 2009). In the present researcher's experience, the spirit house (the small shrine erected outside the house to appease the spirits) is common, though it is uncertain what actual belief this implies. However, it is not certain how much these beliefs and superstitions are held by younger, more educated Thai urbanites compared to the general population, because this has not been examined in detail.

As with other characteristics of this population, the evidence for norms and beliefs is highly fragmented, and only general statements can be made. Additionally, norms and beliefs are a broad area that cannot be easily defined. This makes the discussion of this area difficult for this study.

2.5.3 Culture practice

Although there are several ethnic groups in Thailand generally (including native Thai, Chinese, and other groups from neighboring countries (Malaysia, India, Burma, Viet Nam, and Cambodia) as well as Europeans), Thai national comprise over 90% of Bangkok's population (City-data.com 2007). However, Bangkok is not strongly ethnically segregated. The majority religion is Buddhism (95%), with Islam (4%) being the second most commonly practiced religion (City-data.com 2007). However, there is no information about the extent of actual religious practice in Bangkok's young urbanite population.

It is difficult to make generalizations about the cultural practices of young Thai urbanites because of the breadth of activities available and the wide range of interests. For example, the Bangkok Post (one of the largest online newspapers and owner of the M2F free newspaper) lists a number of events and activities targeted to young Bangkok people this weekend (The Post Publishing Public Company Limited 2014). These include the Thailand Comic Con, a convention targeted to comic and science fiction and fantasy fans; unique cafes such as board game cafes or cafes where you can play with dogs, cats, or bunnies; and a story about Songkran (Thai New Year, occurring in April)(2014a). These wide-ranging activities and cultural occurrences are added to a schedule of festivals, events, and cultural activities that occur year-round. However, there has not been any detailed public research about how frequently these activities are undertaken in the target group of interest or what particular activities are popular.

2.5.4 Trends

One of the main trends of interest is that urbanization in Thailand is actually slowing compared to the rest of the population. Bangkok is the only city in Thailand larger than one million residents, and its population makes up 29.7% of Thailand's total population (World Bank 2014). This is a significant reduction in terms of total population compared to 1990, when Bangkok held 35.3% of the population. However, the urban population is still growing, at a rate of 1.6% compared to 0.1% in 2010 (The Post Publishing Public Company Limited 2014). The most recent statistics showed a

1.42% increase in Bangkok's population (compared to a 2006 high of 1.91%)(2014b). A study in UdonThani Province on urbanization suggests that an increase is mainly driven by capitalist economics, wherein businesses are focused on urban areas and thus people tend to move for work (Thanadorn Phuttharak and Apisak Dhiravisit 2014). This is relevant to the population segment of interest because many young Thai urbanites in Bangkok would have moved for work or educational purposes. Thus, they are contributing to the urbanization. This is not without its cost, since urbanization (especially rapid urbanization) can cause traffic and transport problems as well as societal upsets such as changes in schooling demand, resource requirements, and so on (Thanadorn Phuttharak and Apisak Dhiravisit 2014).

It is difficult to determine other trends, such as changes in culture or norms, because of the lack of other research. In general, psychographic research into Bangkok consumer segments is an area that could use significant improvement. The current research is part of an effort to improve in this area.

2.6 Social influence and perceived behavioral control

This research is partly based on an attitude-behavioral theory known as the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). The TPB explains and predicts behavioral intentions (and thus, most behaviors) through variation in different types of attitudes toward a contemplated action (Ajzen 2005). The model is based on an earlier Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), which proposed the same relationship but with fewer attitudes.

There are several components to the TPB, which act as predictor and outcome variables. The model components are defined as follows:

- Attitudes: emotions or cognitions about a particular action, based in rational assessment of its likely efficacy and appropriateness, past experience, and other factors;

- Social influences (subjective norms): understanding of the perceptions of others about the proposed action, such as whether they engage in it, recommend it or reject it as being appropriate.
- Perceived behavioral control: attitudes about whether or not the action is seen as feasible given the resources that the individual has at their disposal.
- Behavioral intention: the conscious recognition that a particular action is the correct choice for a situation and resolution to engage in it.
- Behavior: the actual implementation of an action (Ajzen 1991)
(Ajzen 2005)

The TPB predicts that the combination of attitudes, social influences, and perceived behavioral control will determine behavioral intentions, which in turn will influence behaviors (Ajzen 2005). However, social influences and behavioral control can also influence attitudes, which is the framework that is examined in this study.

The predictive capability of the TPB varies widely, with most studies finding that 60% to 70% of variation in behavioral intention is related to variation in the three variables (Ajzen 2005). In this research, actual behaviors are the main interest, but these are not fully predicted by behavioral intentions because of intervening factors (Ajzen 2005).

2.6.1 The effect of social influence on attitudes toward advertisement

The first relationship that will be examined is the relationship between social influence and attitudes toward advertisements. There have been a number of studies that identified social influence or social norms as a factor in the consumer's attitude toward advertisement. One study examined the general determinants of consumer attitude toward the firm's marketing approach in the US and South Korea (Kwak,

Forman, and Zinkhan 2009). This study found a number of factors that influenced attitudes toward advertising, including gender, television exposure, and the impact of products and prices. Social norms were seen to impact these attitudes because of the difference in social norms between the groups, which resulted in different outcomes. (For example, Americans had a better view of products and prices). This provides preliminary evidence for the impact of social influence on perceptions of the advertising campaign. Another study examined the impact of social norms on attitudes toward advertising and acceptance of SMS advertising in Jordan (Khasawneh and Shuhaiber 2013). This is a useful area of study because consumers have to make an action (changing settings) to accept SMS advertising. This study found that subjective norms (or social influence) affected the consumer attitudes toward SMS advertising, exerting a positive effect on consumer attitudes toward the practice (Khasawneh and Shuhaiber 2013). Another study that examined negative attitudes toward specific advertisements in Asia also found that social norms and influence were important (Fam et al. 2013). This study found that attitudes toward advertisements that were deemed annoying, violent, overblown and so on were deeply entrenched in existing social norms about what was appropriate for advertisements. These social norms influenced attitudes, which in turn influenced response to the advertisement by the consumer (Fam et al. 2013).

2.6.2 The effect of perceived behavioral control on attitudes toward advertisement

The TPB model also suggests there may be an impact of perceived behavioral control on attitudes toward the issue in question (Ajzen 1991). Higher perceived behavioral control is predicted to improve attitudes, because it increases the perception that an action is possible based on the individual's resources (Ajzen 2005).

There have been some studies that have tested this relationship, though not as many as other relationships within the model. One study did find that perceived behavioral control was a significant factor in negative attitudes toward the use of mobile advertising in China (Shen and Chen 2008). This study examined perceived

risk, which had a negative relationship with perceived behavioral control (in other words, the more risk that was perceived, the more the individual felt they had low behavioral control). It found that a higher perception of risk reduced perceived behavioral control, which in turn worsened attitudes toward mobile advertising. Another study examined the impact of perceived behavioral control on attitudes toward viral marketing in American students (Yang and Zhou 2011). Viral marketing, like SMS marketing, is a form of advertising that requires a direct action on the part of the user (forwarding the material). The study conducted by Yang and Zhou (2011) found that young consumers showed a positive relationship between perceived behavioral control and attitudes toward the viral marketing material. In other words, the more in control they felt, the more positive they were about the material's content and message. This resulted in an increased likelihood that they would forward the material (Yang and Zhou 2011). Taken together, these studies do suggest that perceived behavioral control affects attitudes toward advertising, at least in forms where consumers are not passively exposed but instead must actively accept the advertising content.

2.7 Behavioral change

The core of the TPB model is that attitudes influence behavioral intentions, which in turn influence behavioral change (Ajzen 1991) (Ajzen 2005). However, there are also other factors involved with behavioral change. This section studies the evidence for the effects of attitudes and demographics on behavioral change.

2.7.1 The effect of attitude toward advertisement on behavioral change

A number of studies already discussed have shown a connection between attitudes toward advertisements and some action, such as accepting SMS advertisements and forwarding viral advertisements (Khasawneh and Shuhaiber 2013) (Shen and Chen 2008) (Yang and Zhou 2011). These studies have shown that attitudes have a significant (often large) positive effect on advertising acceptance. Thus, there is initial evidence that attitudes toward advertisement influence behavioral change.

A number of other studies also support this relationship. For example, a study of product placement (a form of advertising where the product and/or its brand is placed prominently in the background of other media, such as film or video games) found that there was a strong relationship between attitudes toward the advertisement and product purchase (Gregorio and Sung 2010). However, it should be noted that the overall rate of action in response to the product placement was relatively low in absolute terms, suggesting that the total impact of attitude may only cause a slight shift in sales changes. Another study of online advertising in six different formats found that attitudes toward the format, as well as online advertising in general, was highly predictive of responses (click-through rates) for all types of advertising format (Burns and Lutz 2006). This study's authors also noted that there is a lot of literature

In summary, there is strong evidence that attitudes toward the advertising (including content and format) will influence the consumer decision for the product or service advertised. However, this relationship does not exist in a vacuum. Instead, there are several intervening variables that can be identified. One of these moderators is consumer product knowledge (or how much the consumer knows about the specific product or product class already) (Chuang et al. 2009). This study showed that consumers with lower consumer product knowledge had more positive attitudes toward terminology-driven advertisements (those that introduced the technical specification and function of the products), and in response had a stronger behavior toward the product. In contrast, those with high levels of product knowledge did not have as strong a relationship.

2.7.2 The influence of demographic factors on behavioral change

In addition to attitudes, there have been a number of studies that have shown demographic factors also influence consumer decisions and behavioral change. In this research, gender, age, income, and education are selected as the key demographic factors to study, since these are the main factors that are relevant in the Thai culture.

A study on viral marketing acceptance (forwarding messages) in young Americans showed some influence of income and gender on behaviors (Yang and Zhou 2011). Specifically, this study showed that a higher monthly income was associated with an increased likelihood of forwarding messages. Similarly, female respondents were more likely to forward viral content than male ones. The authors did caution about this finding, as it was marginally significant, but it was also consistent with other studies that found the same relationship (Yang and Zhou 2011).

Another study specifically targeted gender in consumer decisions related to marketing (accepting mobile marketing) (Karjaluoto et al. 2008). This study showed that women were more likely to accept mobile marketing, due to increased perceptions of usefulness and ease of use. Women also showed increased visit intentions and actual visits to the marketed businesses than men, showing a stronger connection between attitudes and behaviors (Karjaluoto et al. 2008). This study provides strong evidence for gender as a determining factor in behavioral change related to marketing. In contrast, a study on product placement showed that men are more responsive to product placement than women (Gregorio and Sung 2010). Thus, it cannot be assumed from the existing evidence that women will always be more responsive to advertising than men (or vice versa).

A third study extended this by examining gender, age, income, and employment on response to mobile advertising (Karjaluoto et al. 2008). This study found that women and younger consumers were more likely to engage with SMS social marketing campaigns. Additionally, employment status and age differences made a difference in response (though these differences were unpredictable). This supports a more general finding that demographic factors do make a difference in marketing response, though it provides less information than some other studies about the directionality of the relationships.

Studies have offered conflicting information on the mechanism through which income levels influence behaviors. One study examined the choice of certified beef in Spain, identifying a number of demographic factors associated with this choice

(Angulo and Gil 2007). This study found that risk perception related to food safety and quality was the primary determinant of paying for certified beef. However, it also found that higher income level also affected the willingness to pay for certified beef. This relationship is easily explained since certified beef is more expensive, thus a higher income level will help the individual perceive that he or she can afford the choice (Angulo and Gil 2007). However, this does not say anything about consumer decisions that have a less obvious cost-based component. Another study on risk perception on fish found that consumer income did not influence the actual attitudes or perceptions of risk (Verbeke et al. 2005). Instead, consumers of high and low incomes had the same risk associations and perceptions of fish. However, those with high incomes could take a wider range of actions in response to this risk (Verbeke et al. 2005).

The evidence for educational status impact on the consumer decision is somewhat weaker than age, gender, or income, although there is some. In theory, educational level is one of the demographic factors that will influence consumer decisions, perhaps because of increased exposure to information or changes in cognitive approaches associated with information assessment and decision-making (Zhang and Zhang 2007). There is also evidence that educational level changes risk perceptions, such as the perception of food safety (Angulo and Gil 2007). Higher levels of education increase information awareness and availability, decreasing perception of risk. However, relatively few studies have examined these effects independently of other factors. In this study, it is important to consider the impact of educational level because of its effect on newspaper readership. Higher levels of education have been associated with increased levels of routine newspaper readership, especially for older and higher income readers (Chan and Goldthorpe 2007). Since routine newspaper readership will change the perception of information presented within the newspaper, this makes educational level an important consideration in this study.

In summary, the evidence strongly supports that gender and age will have an influence on the consumer decision regarding advertising. Results are less certain for income, with studies demonstrating variable effects. However, the evidence that does

exist means it is reasonable to test this factor in the present study. Educational level is included because of its importance to newspaper readership and its potential impact on exposure and response to advertisements.



CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The chapter begins with a discussion of the research process and approach. It then describes the population of interest and the sampling procedure. Third, the data collection approach is described, followed by a description of the data analysis approach. The final section of the chapter discusses the ethical concerns and implications of the study.

3.1 Research process and approach

The research process was a combination of two qualitative approaches. Qualitative research, which uses non-numeric data and diverse analysis methods (Creswell 2014), had a number of advantages for this research. The main reason for using a qualitative approach is that it allowed for a combination of data types and information, as well as offering insights and explorations into what effect the advertisements have and why they are effective according to the viewers. Given the low level of research into free daily newspapers, this should be regarded as exploratory research.

The research process began with analysis of five front-page advertising specials on M2F, selected from a period of one month. Advertising specials were selected from advertisements that have presented idea life style in term of health, physical appearance, comfort and convenience, the appearance of sophistication, and financial security. The advertisements were collected during August to October 2013. The covers were analyzed in terms of the textual wording and use of color and graphics and how these are designed to attract the reader's attention, influence their attitudes and persuade them toward a goal.

The second stage of the research was interviews with young Thai-reading Bangkok residents who read M2F. The reason for these interviews was to identify how the advertisements used reflect or project their ideal lifestyles. The reason for using interviews in addition to the advertising analysis was to understand both the

advertiser's persuasive approach and how the reader perceives the campaign. Since advertising is not necessarily directed toward immediate sales (Percy and Rosenbaum-Elliott 2012), this effect would be difficult to measure otherwise.

3.2 Sample and sampling procedure

The population of interest for the interviews was young Thai urbanites who read M2F at least two times a month. Participants were selected using a purposive technique. Purposive sampling, which selects participants based on their perceived characteristics, is not usually used in quantitative research, but is standard in qualitative research (Maxwell 2013). This is because qualitative research requires a far higher investment of researcher and participant time than quantitative research, and the trade-off for this is that it uses a much smaller sample size. Thus, the qualitative researcher needs to make sure all participants meet certain characteristics. This research chose to use the maximum variation technique of purposive sampling, where participants are selected from the range of characteristics (Maxwell 2013). This included for example male and female participants, older and younger participants, and participants that are light or heavy M2F readers.

The second question is the sample size. Typically, because of the heavy commitment of resources for each participant, sample sizes in qualitative research are much smaller (Maxwell 2013). The sample size was determined by available resources (particularly researcher time) and the point at which the researcher reaches theoretical saturation, where no new information is derived (Maxwell 2013). The target size for this research was six participants, based on these guidelines. This sample size was manageable with available resources and provided enough information for analysis.

3.3 Data collection

The data collection was conducted using face-to-face interviews, conducted in Thai or English on the preference of the participant. The interviews were conducted as a single semi-structured interview, lasting between 10 and 20 minutes depending on the participant. Interviews were audio recorded, while the researcher kept notes. Audio recordings were then transcribed for analysis.

Semi-structured interviews are interviews that use a shared framework or question guide for all participants, but which allow participants and the researcher to explore different areas as desired (Galletta 2013). Semi-structured interviews have a number of advantages, including that they allow more detailed discussion and allow the participant to challenge the researcher's conceptions about their experience (Galletta 2013). They do also have some disadvantages, including being difficult to keep moving toward a shared direction and some problems in questionnaire formulation. In order to prevent these problems, the researcher chose a very simple approach to the interview guide, using mainly open-ended questions and following up during the interviews as necessary. The items in the interview guide included:

1. How often do you read M2F? How do you read it?
2. Please describe your current lifestyle.
3. What do you think about M2F advertising?
4. (Using 10 selected advertisements):
 - a. How do you feel when you see this advertisement?
 - b. Do you think this advertisement influences your lifestyle? If so, how? If not, why not?

The interview process also included introductory and conversational discussion meant to set the researcher and participant at ease, and collection of personal information.

3.4 Data analysis

The data analysis technique used for advertising was visual analysis. In this analysis process, the key focal points and elements of the advertisement, such as font, layout, color, graphics, and textual information, were categorized (Leeuwen and Jewitt 2001). Following this process, shared elements and unique elements were identified. The social and cognitive meaning of each of the elements was then identified and assessed in terms of what message it is sending and what the persuasive goals of the advertiser were.

The second stage of analysis was content analysis for the interviews. Qualitative content analysis is a technique that codes and analyzes textual or narrative data to derive meaning and interpret the content (Maxwell 2013). This technique was chosen because it was most likely to derive information from the varied interviews and the ways in which they evolved. Following transcription of the interviews, the researcher included notes from the interview process. The transcripts were then analyzed to identify units of meaningful content and this content was coded and categorized. The researcher then combined all of the interview transcripts in order to develop a full understanding of the meaning.

In order to present the data, the researcher integrated the visual analysis and content analysis. Key quotes from the raw interviews were included, as were visual samples of the advertisements, in order to illustrate specific points and provide more detail and depth. These combined approaches allowed the researcher to demonstrate both intentions and effects of the advertisements in a compelling way.

CHAPTER 4: ADVERTISEMENT ANALYSIS

The first strand of research involved the use of imagery analysis from a random selection of five advertisements from the front page of M2F. The advertisements selected included several different products in two categories (food and drink products and condominiums). The advertised products included:

- *Soy Milk* (Advertisement 1)
- *Ideo Condominiums* (Advertisement 2)
- *Yogurt* (Advertisement 3)
- *Oolong Tea* (Advertisement 4)
- *Charoenkrung 80 Condominiums* (Advertisement 5)

The figures provided for this assessment include superimposed English text translations of the Thai text, to ensure that the reader can interpret the advertisements. Each of the advertisements is discussed below, with an analysis of its graphical and text elements and how these elements are designed to reflect the reader's ideal lifestyles.

4.1 General patterns of the advertisements

The five advertisements selected do share specific or common patterns. The advertisements were all selected from the front-page advertising of the M2F daily newspaper. In three cases (Advertisements 2, 3, and 5), the advertisement included the front page only. In two cases (Advertisements 1 and 4) the advertisements were displayed on a full wrap-around page, including the front and back page of the newspaper. All advertisements were full-page and included no additional products (only the newspaper header and other information at the top). Although the researcher did not statistically assess front page advertisements, an overview of the month's advertisements suggest that these are the two most commonly advertised types of products. The advertisements all used various graphic and textual depictions, although

most of the advertisements relied more heavily on graphical depictions than textual depictions. Some advertisements included very little textual information at all, while others did include more information.

4.1.1 Advertisement 1

The first advertisement considered was for a Soy Milk brand (Figure 4). This advertisement comes in bilingual (Thai and English). The advertisement uses a peripheral route approach, connecting the image of youth (a picture of a young Thai woman in tank top) with the product. The young woman in tank top can be remarked as confident and healthy woman who like to exercise. This serves to trigger heuristic connections between the image and the product (O'Keefe 2008). The text does not really impart any information except making the connection between soy milk and youth explicit. The headline reads (in Thai):

“Experience the youth for yourself.”

On the second half of the advertisement, the text continues

“At Have you drank a carton of Soy Milk yet?” “Fair.”

The advertisement includes date and time information where it would be possible to receive a product sample. The text on the second half of the advertisement concludes,

“You will know that age can be reduced with a carton of Soy Milk.”

As with other advertisements, this advertisement draws on changes in Thai urbanite eating patterns compared to traditional eating patterns. Changing ideals about health and cleanliness of food are important characteristics of Thai urbanites (Chulanee Thianthai 2003). The advertisement encourages the type of food exploration that has become common. However, it also reflects a concern for youth and health. Previous authors have demonstrated that there are increasing trends toward Westernized ideals of youth and beauty, manifesting in demand for younger and thinner appearance (Chulanee Thianthai 2003). This concern, particularly for women, is the main motivation for responding to this advertisement.

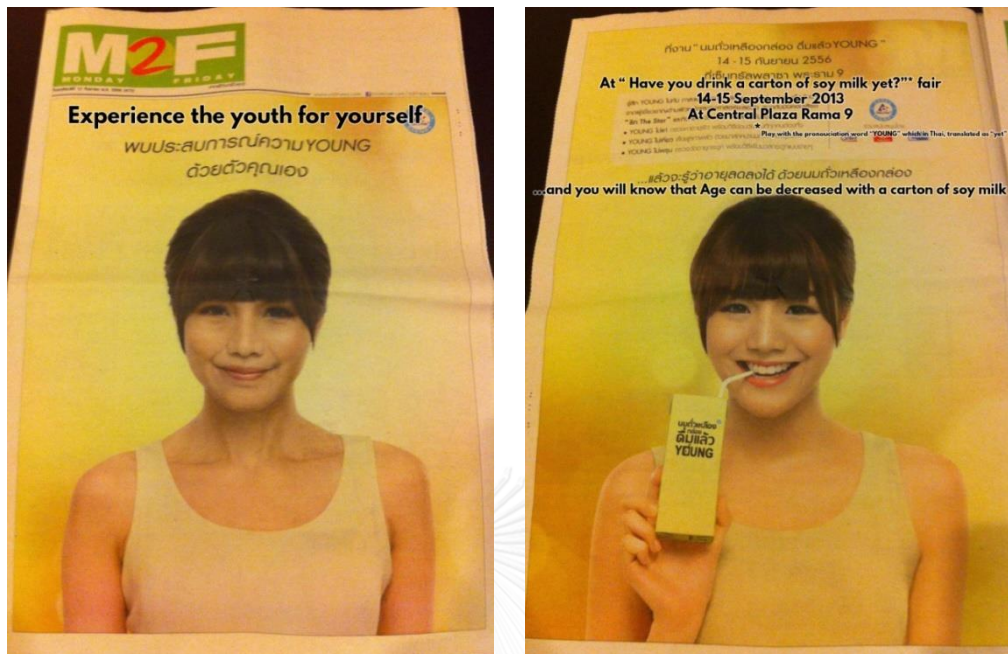


Photo 1: Soy Milk advertisement

4.1.2 Advertisement 2

The second advertisement is for the Ideo 2 condominium building, located near the Pho Nimit BTS Skytrain stop. This advertisement is only on the front page. The text of the image includes two people (one male and one female) in t-shirts. The man faces forward, while the woman is portrayed in profile. There is little text associated with the advertisement. It states,

“Feel 2 forms of lifestyle and receive 2 special deals.”

This advertisement’s main claim is of convenience (being next to a Skytrain stop), and the image is unconnected via a peripheral route. Thus, it is primarily informational about the location and can be considered a central route dominated persuasion effort (O’Keefe 2008).

The most obvious characteristic of the Thai urbanite lifestyle this advertisement is reflecting and drawing on is the tendency to commute to work rather than working close to home (Ratchapan Choiejit). Many commuters are reliant on the BTS Skytrain and MRT systems (Ratchapan Choiejit). Thus, placement close to one of these systems could be very important for a young person who is already working many hours, since it would reduce the amount of time they have to spend commuting. It is also likely to appeal to M2F readers specifically, since most distribution points for M2F are in and around the MRT and BTS transit hubs and stations (The Post Publishing Public Company Limited 2014). It is also likely that this advertisement would appeal to slightly older commuters looking to reduce the amount of time they spend in traffic, which can be a serious problem in urbanizing Thailand (Thanadorn Phuttharak and Apisak Dhiravisit 2014).



Photo 2: Ideo Condominium advertisement

4.1.3 Advertisement 3

Advertisement 3 is for a brand of yogurt called Bulgaria, made by Korean food conglomerate Meiji. This advertisement is mainly directed to the peripheral route, invoking a foreign scene and alpine wholesomeness with the imagery. This draws on connections between snow and untouched alpine landscapes and purity, as well as a connection between rural landscapes and health. The text on the advertisement states,

*“First time with MEIJI Bulgaria Yogurt –
Authentic Yogurt
Original
For your Good Health”*

The advertisement then shows containers of the yogurt and indicates that it has won a good taste prize. This information adds a central route element to the advertisement, which supports decision making with seemingly objective criteria (O'Keefe 2008).

This advertisement strongly invokes the idea of food as an urbanite experience and goal. The images and name (a country in Europe) indicate that the food is foreign, while the text addresses its authenticity and contribution to health. This imagery is once again consistent with changing food norms, including increased consumption of foreign food (Chulanee Thianthai 2003). (Yogurt and dairy generally, are not main components of traditional Thai diet). However, it also invokes something that is not reflected in the existing literature, which is a desire for travel and new experience. The imagery is based in a foreign country, as is the name, suggesting that the advertisers see a demand for travel as part of an ideal lifestyle.



Photo 3: Meiji Bulgaria Yogurt advertisement

4.1.4 Advertisement 4

The fourth advertisement is for a brand of cold prepared oolong tea called TEA+Plus. This advertisement takes a purely central route approach to persuasion, explaining the health benefits of the product. The image on the first half of the advertisement shows the bottle of tea itself, positioned alongside a plate of food. This advertisement also contains scientific information. This advertisement might aim to attract sophisticated group of people. Text on this side of the advertisement reads:

*“Brand New! Oolong Tea “TEA PLUS”
“Fresh.... Let’s drink it to our heart’s content.”*

On the rear page, the advertisement makes a specific health claim. The main image is of a digestive tract, with small versions of the OTPP molecule attacking fat molecules, with a woman pointing upward. Explanatory text on the image demonstrates the action of the molecules. The main text on the advertisement states:

*“Oolong tea’s secret revealed –
Blocking fat absorption because it has OTPP substance!”*

The purpose of this advertisement is to inform the reader about oolong tea’s effect on fat absorption and promote the brand as a source of this benefit.

This advertisement is mainly based in a demand for health and changing health needs. The health benefit of the oolong tea drink is reducing the fat absorption from the diet. This is consistent with changing diet norms and concern for health (Chulanee Thianthai 2003).



Photo 4: Oolong Tea advertisement

4.1.5 Advertisement 5

The final advertisement is a single-page advertisement advertising August Condominiums (located at 80 Charoenkrung). This advertisement presents the picture of a man sleeping with backdrop of city view. Unlike the Ideo 2 advertisement, this advertisement draws on peripheral route persuasion, by invoking images of relaxation

and access to the city that are meant to promote positive feelings (O'Keefe 2008). The advertisement's strapline reads:

*“Charoenkrung 80
The coordinates of happiness for you”*

The remainder of the text is about the opening of the condominium. It states that the grand opening is 13-15th September, and that prices start at 1.7 million baht (equivalent to £32,000). Thus, there is some central route information included, that could help viewers make a decision about the condominiums. However, it does not provide more information about the condominiums, suggesting this information is more meant to encourage visits.

Rather than invoking demand for convenience, as the Ideo 2 advertisements do, the August Condominiums advertisement constructs the ideal lifestyle as one of happiness and contentment. By showing the model in a relaxed position, the advertisement suggests that one will feel at home. This can be viewed in light of the increasing urban migration by young adults into the city in search of work (Thanadorn Phuttharak and Apisak Dhiravisit 2014). Because urbanization necessarily involves leaving home, the person that migrates may feel displaced or uncomfortable. August Condominiums recognizes that part of the ideal lifestyle of the Thai urbanite is someplace they can *call home* and be happy, which is what it draws on in its advertisement.



Photo 5: August Condominium advertisement

4.2 Synthesis and summary

The advertisements share a number of characteristics that are important. First, most of the advertisements are about things that can be construed as *news* – new products on the market (Advertisements 3 and 4) or events such as open houses or product sample fairs (Advertisements 1, 2, and 5). Shimp and Andrews (2013) pointed out that newspaper advertisements are effective for this type of advertising because readers are already in a mind frame to accept information about new products or happenings. Second, all of the advertisements are full-color display advertising, including graphics and text with only a single advertisement displayed on the page.

This is the most expensive form of advertising, but it also avoids the problem of confusion between advertisements or visual clutter (O'Guinn, Allen, and Semenik 2012). The problem of poor graphic reproduction (Shimp and Andrews 2013) can also be seen in the advertisements, which have a limited color palette and little tonal variation. Some advertisers have tried to offset this (such as the Ideo 2 advertisement, which uses a very simple color palette).

Aspects of the ideal lifestyle of young Thai urbanites reflected in the advertisement are numerous. The condominium advertisements reflect conflicting desires for the home environment – that it should be convenient to commute from and reduce the commute as much as possible (Ideo 2), while at the same time it should feel comfortable and make one happy (August). The food advertisements also reflect multiple needs and desires on the part of young Thai urbanites. All three food advertisements make a claim to health, ranging from general (Bulgaria yogurt is “good for you”) to the specific (Tea+Plus’s OTPP molecules help reduce fat absorption). They also address different health concerns, like aging and weight control, which could affect urbanites with busy schedules and a long commute. The yogurt advertisement speaks to higher needs on Maslow’s hierarchy, including the desire for new experience, as well as evoking the countryside.

Taken together, these advertisements reflect an ideal lifestyle that allows balance of the urban experience (for example, easy access to work and new and interesting foods) with preservation of mental and physical health (reduction of negative health concerns like weight gain and aging and the desire for happiness at home). The advertisements tend to be limited in their use of text, and it is split between central and peripheral route (though perhaps more peripheral route advertising). These advertisements suggest that the advertisers are speaking to a group that is looking for happiness, health, and convenience.

There are five key lifestyle messages that can be identified in the advertisements. These key messages are health, physical appearance, comfort and convenience, the appearance of sophistication, and financial security. Health messages relate to health concerns, while physical appearance relates to personal grooming, weight and other personal appearance measures. These two dimensions can mainly be identified in the consumer products (cold tea and yogurt). Aspects of comfort and convenience, the appearance of sophistication, and financial security can be identified in the condominium advertisements. These aspects speak to longer term concerns about home life and future and long-term security, which could affect individuals more deeply. These dimensions of the ideal lifestyle reflect different concerns of young urbanites. Concerns like health and physical appearance speak to everyday concerns and needs to improve health and maintain physical appearance. Long-term needs, like stability and home comfort, are addressed by the comfort and convenience, the appearance of sophistication, and financial security messages of the home ownership advertisements. These messages are likely to appeal to different consumer groups.

CHAPTER 5: IMPACTS OF ADVERTISEMENT ON READER PERCEPTION

In this chapter, concern the second stage of the research involved interviewing M2F readers (n = 6) in order to understand how they viewed the advertisements and how the advertisements reflected their ideal lifestyle and influenced them. These interviews included examination of ten advertisements (including the five advertisements analyzed above and five additional advertisements). Participants were asked about their perception of the advertisements and how it affected them. This chapter provides a discussion of the findings from this research. It also provides a brief discussion of the findings compared to the literature in Chapter 2.

5.1 Interview analysis

5.1.1 Participants

Participants ranged in age from 23 to 34 years old. All were single. The group included one Master's student, four private employees in finance, telecommunications, and logistics industries, and a state-owned enterprise employee. Two participants live with their families, while the others own or rent condos. All commute on the MRT or BTS, with most estimating they have a 20 minutes or more commute. Leisure activities included reading, hanging out with friends, travelling, and spending time in the gym or exercising.

The respondents shared some views on their lifestyle and experiences. For example, their living situation and convenience to work is one of their primary concerns. As Participant 3 points out that he works long hours and needs as short a commute as possible. Several participants would like to move closer to their jobs to offset this. Time pressures are a general concern expressed by all participants. Another concern is health and conflicts with maintaining it. Several participants note they spend time involved in exercise, though they feel they should spend more, or that they diet and limit alcohol intake. This suggests that they share a concern for healthy living and try to maintain it.

The respondents showed a number of psychographic characteristics as well as their demographic characteristics. (Psychographic characteristics are discussed in Section 2.5). These include aspects of behaviors, norms and beliefs, cultural practices and trends. One consistency with known psychographic and behavioral trends is that most of the participants (four out of six) live on their own or with friends rather than with family members. This is consistent with trends for younger workers to move to Bangkok seeking work (United Nations Thailand 2008). Another behavioral trend that is consistent with the literature is that several respondents often eat outside the home, either from food stalls or from Thai or international restaurants, sometimes on a daily basis. This is increasingly common for Thai urbanites, who routinely eat in restaurants and may be more likely to eat international food (Chulanee Thianthai 2003). All participants commute, taking either the BTS/MRT or MRT to work with transit times of 20 minutes to an hour. This was an expected finding given the nature of M2F distribution around commuting areas. However, it is also consistent with the longer commutes that are increasingly common for Bangkok residents (Ratchapan Choiejit). Thus, while detailed psychographics are not available, behaviors surrounding work and living are consistent with what is known about Thai urbanites.

	Age	Occupation	Living Scenario	Area	Commuting	Remark
R1	27	A private employee of an international logistics company	I rent an apartment with my roommate (close friend from high school) around Prakanong. It is quite convenience as I lived within walking distance of fresh market, restaurants and 7-Eleven.	Prakanong	Take BTS to work	Usually hang out with friends to play badminton or shopping
R2	34	A state enterprise employee	My residence is self-own condominium in Bang Sue.	Bang Sue	Take MRT to work	Like reading an travelling
R3	30	Work for commercial bank	I can get to my workplace by 20 minute MRT ride from my condo. My work starts	City	Take MRT to work	Regular exercise, hang out, seeing movie,

			from 8.30 am and usually finishes around 6pm. I don't cook. So I have most meals at food stalls or restaurants or sometimes buy them from street and eat at home.			and reading book
R4	23	Studying master degree	Living with my family (4 members - mom, dad, my older brother, and me).	Wuttakard BTS station	Take BTS to university	My free time, I often stay at my house, reading and exploring online
R5	23	Work for True cooperation as an international call centre	Living with my parents but I want to buy a condo to live on my own in the near future because my house is quite far from my work place	-	Take BTS/MRT	normally hang out with friends after work and go home late
R6	29	Working in a financial sector	I sometimes have dinner with friends or colleagues after work somewhere around Siam or Asoke. On week end, I love to spend most of the time read a book at some nice coffee cafe. I want to be healthy so I try to eat only healthy foods and exercise but in fact I don't have much time to do the exercise especially during weekday because I finish work late.	-	Take MRT to work	
R = Reader						

Table 2: Interviewee information

5.1.2 Perspectives on advertisements

Participants were first asked their general impressions of the M2F front page advertising. Levels of interest in the advertisements varied – while R3 stated they “hardly pay attention to the advertising page”, R4 stated that they read the advertisements a lot.

R4: “2-3 times a week. I normally get M2F when I go to my university in Phayathai area. I spend about 15 minutes reading it when I wait for something or someone; for example, when I wait for class to begin”.

R1: “It's kind of interesting. The artwork is attractive, as well as wording. It always catches my attention”,

R2: “It's kind of interesting. The artwork is attractive, as well as wording. It always catches my attention. Some of them seem attractive, large and colorful pictures”,

R5: “I sometimes feel amaze with the cover because the idea and/or concept behind the picture is quite interesting. I do not like the hard sale cover as they are not so attractive”, and

R6: “Some of them are good, great content and art work”

R1, R2, R5 and R6 expressed positive feelings about the artwork and concepts of the ads, although R5 was negative about the hard-sell advertisements that sometimes appeared. Several participants felt the advertising was “interesting” or “eye-catching”, suggesting that it does reach a basic level of notability.

This information provides context for the next set of questions, which addressed how participants felt about a series of advertisements from the front page. The outcomes of these viewpoints are discussed below. Following these discussions, participants were asked about whether they felt these advertisements influenced their

lifestyles. Most participants said that the advertisements introduce them to new products and services or remind them of products they already knew about. The advertisements might prompt them to look for more information (for example, searching for the condos after seeing the advertisement), or might prompt them to try a product for the first time. However, this effect was mainly for products or services that already complemented their lifestyle or might fulfill an existing need. Products that did not address one of their existing needs did not generate much interest. Thus, the main influence of the advertisements could be described as reminding the participants about the products, rather than prompting direct sales.

5.1.2.1 Vaseline

R1: “Yes. I want my skin to be brighter. I tried many beauty products that promise a fair skin within weeks. Some are works but I have no certain choice of body lotion brands. I might pick Vaseline next time.”

R2: “Not interested. I not use this kind of product.”

R3: “I don't want any brighter skin as I'm already white. But I need something like oil control, perhaps.”

R4: “I always use skin care products to protect and keep my healthy skin. I want to try some counter brand skin care or cosmetic, but it's too expensive for me.”

R5: “I'm not interested in cosmetic product so it does not attract me but I do remember this brand and I may soap from Vaseline.”⁴

R6: “I want my skin to be bright and smooth so I would love to try skincare products Vaseline is one of my choice.”

R2, R3, and R5 were not interested by this advertisement because they do not use whitening products. However, R3 and R5 stated they might like another product from the brand, like soap or oil control, and would look for the brand. R1 was very interested, stating that she changed body products frequently looking for one that delivered on its promises. She might choose this product next time. R4 wanted to try counter brands, but it was too expensive, and R6 stated that Vaseline is one of her choice products. Thus, this advertisement had a potential influence even in participants that would not use the product itself. This influence is related to beauty standards attainment.

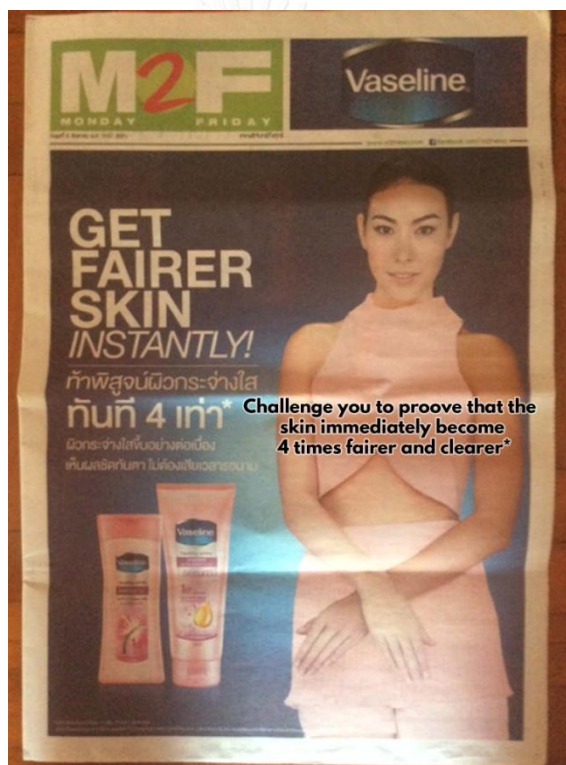


Photo 6: Vaseline advertisement

5.1.2.2 British Council

R1: “I need to improve my English for my career. I am good in reading and writing but not so fluent on speaking. British Council is one of my choices as they offer a variety of conversation classes and flexible timetable.”

R2: “Interesting because I want to improve my English speaking skill for my career.”

R3: “English is my office language so I want to improve it everyday. If there is any interesting course that can enhance my English with reasonable fee, I may apply for it.”

R4: “I want to improve my language skills, not only English but Japanese also. I took some language courses when I was an undergrad. They are very useful. I took one writing class at British council.”

R5: “English is very important to me as I have to use it every day for my job. Anyway, I still want to improve my writing and reading skill to gain more income because the company is now paying me THB15,000 per month plus language skill of THB3,000 (TOEIC score 650+) and they will pay me THB1,000 more if I can meet TOEIC score of 750+. So British council is quite an interesting choice for me but I have to check the course outline and timetable whether they are fit for me or not.”

R6: “Great deal from British council for office people because we need a flexible timetable to fit our lifestyle. I would love to find more detail about this one but price will be the most important factor for me to decide whether to buy this course or not.”

All of the participants were interested in this advertisement, which offers English language classes. Everyone indicated that English was needed for their careers, and that they had skill gaps that they needed to fill. R4 previously took a writing course at the British Council and found it very helpful. The main concern was timetables (though R1 and R6 noted they have a very flexible timetable) and cost (though R5 stated his workplace would pay for it). This is potentially a highly

influential advertisement that reflects on the lifestyle aspiration of getting ahead in careers.



Photo 7: British Council advertisement

5.1.2.3 K-Money

R1: "I am not sure what it is. Starting with 500 baht means 500 baht a day or minimum investment at 500. For finance product, I need clearer information that what is presented in this ad."

R2: "Interesting because the ad tells me that I can invest with just small amount of money, 500 THB."

R3: "I'm interested by the idea to start investing just only 500 baht. I want to get more detail about it."

R4: “I will invest my money in the future, but I don’t really know much about this area now.”

R5: “I have not much knowledge about managing my income as I just graduated and started working here less than a year. The company deducts some amount from my income for paying tax and social security fee so I think now the money products make no interest to me but they will in the near future when I gain more income.”

R6: “Since I am working in a financial sector, this advertising gain my attention! I will sure try this one soon.”

The K-Money advertisement mainly invoked confusion or lack of interest. R6 was interested because she works in the financial sector. However, R1, R4 and R5 said they did not understand the advertisement or were not interested. R1 stated the problem perfectly: “For a finance product, I need clearer information that what is presented in this ad.” R2 and R3 were interested enough to check it out, but did not say they would buy it.

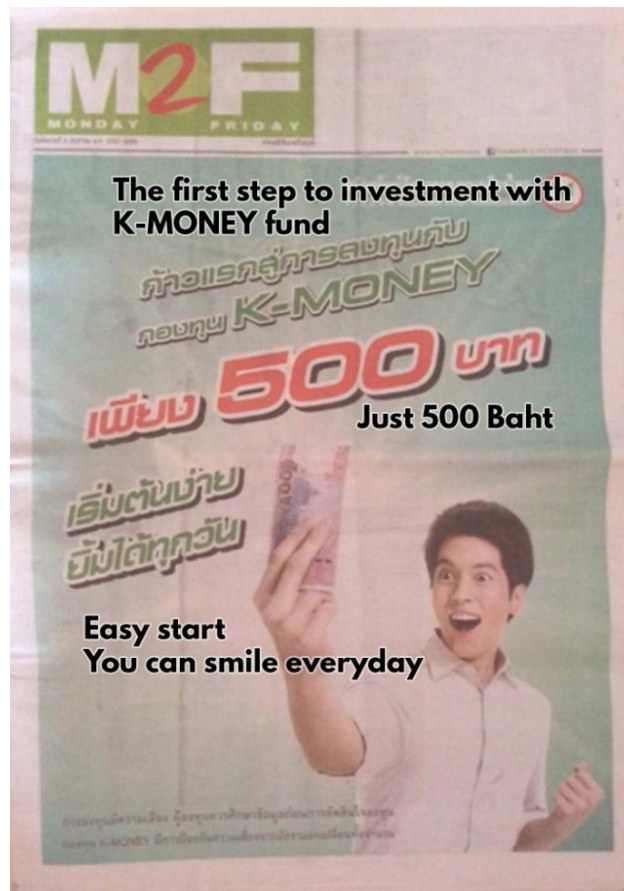


Photo 8: K-Money advertisement

5.1.2.4 Soy Milk

R1: “Soy milk is proved to be better than cow milk. I have read many articles saying that it contains less fat and healthier.”

R2: “Not interested. The ad doesn’t give me the details or any clues about the products.”

R3: “Cow milk is not good for my digest. So I always prefer soy milk. The ad itself is not convincing showing photos of the presenter looking younger when she drinks soy milk. But what makes me interested is the invitation to the event where

some celeb will share their health tips. I beleive there is more than just drinking milk to make you healthy.”

R4: “I drink both milk and soy milk. But this advertisement made me think that soy milk is better for me and my health.”

R5: “I am a sport lover. I do running, swimming, playing table tennis and cycling sometime. I found that soy milk is good but it contains sugar so I choose to consume the cow skim milk from convenience stores around my workplace and nearby my living area.”

R6: “I normally drink soy milk and always prefer soy milk than cow milk. This is interesting event but I might not join because I can easily find more information about soy milk online instead to join the event.”

For this advertisement, participants often expressed a personal preference for soy milk, based on health perceptions or difficulty with cow milk (R1, R3, R4 and R6). However, the advertisement itself was deemed to be unconvincing. R2 said “the advertisement doesn’t give me any details about the products”, while R3 stated that the age manipulation of the presenter was unconvincing. None showed a strong inclination to attend the event with R6 pointing out that she could find out information via the Internet more easily (though R3 was interested in the celebrity beauty tips promised).



Photo 9: Soy Milk advertisement

5.1.2.5 August Condo

R1: “Starting price at 1.7M seems affordable to me but the location is too far from my workplace and BTS.”

R2: “Interesting because the Starting price just 1.7M which is affordable and open investment opportunity.”

R3: “I just bought a condo unit, which is already close to my office and other places I frequently go. So I am not interested in buying a new one. Its location is quite far from skytrain so it may not be a good investment if I buy it for sub-rent or resale.”

R4: “I don’t think my parents will let me buy a condominium. We have our own 3 bedroom-house and it’s close to BTS station. To be honest, I think that I want to live independently in the future and stay with my parents during the weekend. Anyway, there are some positive and negative points to compare. Living with parents,

I will not have to worry about some house works or meal. On the other side, living alone is a kind of adult thing.”

R5: “This is what I am looking for, the buyable living space which I can live by myself. I will definitely search more details about this condo. Because living in condo nearby mass transportation will make my life much easier.”

R6: “Nice art work but its location is just not interested for me because it is far from my office and I never live in that area.”

For this advertisement, a strong preference for convenience to public transport came to the forefront. R1, R3, and R6 all pointed out its inconvenient location and lack of easy access via MRT or BTS sky train. R1 and R2 did point out that it was affordable, which was good, but as R3 noted, lack of transport might mean it was a poor investment. R4 and R5 both expressed interest, because their future plans involved owning a condominium as a space of their own and as a way to move away from parents. Thus, this advertisement is more interesting to participants as an ideal image (of one’s own home) than in actuality (due to its inconvenience).



Photo 10: August Condo advertisement

5.1.2.6 ELLE Fashion Film Festival

R1: "I like fashion but not a kind that attend a fashion show festival."

R2: "Not interested. I rarely use luxury brands."

R3: "A film addicts me. I myself will surely go to see some of these films. I'm getting bored with junk action movies taking up all show times in all cinemas."

R4: "I heard about this event before. But at that time, I didn't really have time to join. I love watching movie both in cinema and at home."

R5: "Fashion is not my favorite subject to talk about. But I may tell my lady colleagues about this advertisement."

R6: “I like both fashions and films but I think this advertising is just to PR the event and it must be only for guests or people working in those industries who can join.

This advertisement was not recognized by participants as being “for them”. R1, R2, and R5 indicated outright that they were not interested in the event, due to lack of interest in either fashion or film. R3 and R4 expressed interest, but because of an interest in film rather than in fashion. R6 stated that she likes fashion and film, but perceived the advertisement as a PR effort intended for the industry and doubted the public could join. Thus, this advertisement failed to connect with the participants or their perceptions of ideal lifestyle.



Photo 11: ELLE Fashion Film Festival advertisement

5.1.2.7 Ideo Double Mode Condos

R1: “Ideo condo is a very good choice. Although it is a bit far from my office but there is a nearby BTS station. 1990 baht monthly cost lower than my apartment rental though.”

R2: “Interesting because I do know the Ideo brand, the campaign 1,999 THB monthly installment is attractive enough.”

R3: “If there is other reason for buying condo, it is for investment. Ideo Condos are always located in prime area near BTS or MRT stations. The price is attractive enough.”

R4: “Same as August condo, I like comfortably living in Condo and its location. But it’s too early for me to think about this.”

R5: “This condo is also a good choice but I think the price will be much higher than August Condo. At this stage I think I couldn’t afford this property but it will be one of my choices in 4-5 year time.”

R6: “Ideo is one of the famous brands but I am not interested for this project because the location is too far from CBD.”

The Ideo condominium advertisement invoked name recognition from many of the participants (R1, R2), but some of the same objections like distance from offices or public transport also arose. As with the August condos, ideas about comfort and personal space arose for some who were considering or imagining buying condominiums in future arose (R4, R5).

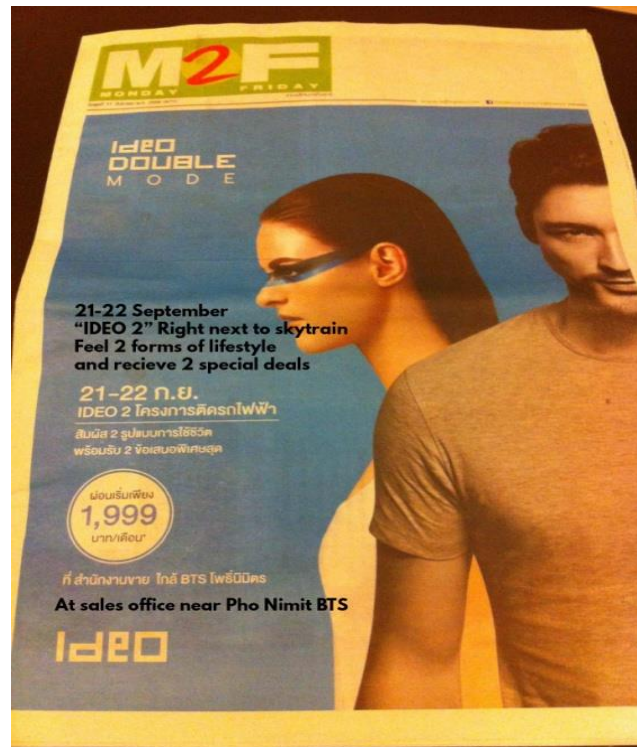


Photo 12: Ideo advertisement

5.1.2.8 Tea+Plus

R1: “The instant tea drink is between pop drink and fresh fruit juice. I prefer beauty drink than just green tea drink as it offers more obvious benefit like collagen which is good for my skin. Seeing this ad, I might try U-long tea after big meal to prevent me from gaining weight.”

R2: “Interesting because I sometimes buy tea or green tea products but I’ve never try Tea plus, the ad stimulates me to try Tea plus product.”

R3: “I’m coffee guy. I have it at least one cup every day. But I don’t fancy ice tea made by Thai manufacturers. It is too sweet for my taste.”

R4: “I think tea is better than soda. I normally buy tea or green to when I buy drink at convenience store. This ads made me think that tea is better than coffee.”

R5: “I do not prefer drinking bottled tea from any brand but this brand claims that they are healthy tea, I may try one day. As I mentioned before that I normally drink skim milk and water.”

R6: “Green tea drink is one of my favorite but if I gonna buy one it must be a sugar free only.”

The Tea+Plus advertisement responses were once again based on personal preferences, along with perceptions about health concerns. For example, R1 prefers beauty drinks that offer other benefits, while R6 likes green tea but will only drink sugar-free tea. R5 does not drink bottled tea, while R3 thinks Thai manufacturers make their tea too sweet. While there is a general trend of health concerns (including beauty, sugar content, and so on), most responses are based on personal taste rather than lifestyle construction.



Photo 13: Tea+Plus advertisement

5.1.2.9 Meiji Bulgaria Yogurt

R1: “I first saw this yogurt at 7-Eleven and tried it before I have seen advertisement elsewhere. The yogurt was delicious, smooth and textured. I love the sweetened one with green-color label. The original flavor is rather sour to me.”

R2: “Not interested. I’m not a yogurt customer and I saw this ad many times on other media ads.”

R3: “I love its taste and effect on my digest. I shit regularly after eat Meiji yogurt.”

R4: “Yogurt is always in my refrigerator. I have tried this Meiji Bulgaria and I think the taste is good. This brand is my favorite and their ads always show how this product is good for your health.”

R5: “This kind of food is quite new for me. I never tasted yoghurt before. My friend bought it for me and said that it is the best quality of yoghurt in the market. So I had a small portion but I did not like it much. I would not buy it for myself otherwise someone buy it for me.”

R6: “I have tried this product and it's good. I like the low sugar with blue label one.”

Several of the participants had already tried Bulgaria Yogurt (R1, R3, R4, R5, R6). While R5 did not like the product (it was her first time trying yogurt), the other participants did like it. R3 and R4 cited positive perceptions of health effects and good digestion. R1 and R6 stated positive perceptions of its taste. R2 did not want to try the product because she does not like yogurt. However, none of the participants connected it to a deeper preference or lifestyle need.



Photo 14: Meiji Bulgaria Yogurt advertisement

5.1.2.10 JCB Credit Card

R1: “I hold 2 credit cards now and have no plan to apply more until the old debt is paid off.”

R2: “Interesting because I hear the JCB credit card name but I don’t know the details and the benefits of the card.”

R3: “I already have 2 credit cards and the credit line is more than enough. I try not to overspend. So I am not tempted to apply another credit card. Besides, the promotion in this ad (discount on some Japanese restaurants) is similar to other credit cards that I use already.”

R4: “I don’t have any experiences using credit card, not even a debit one. I always use cash.”

R5: “I heard from many senior colleagues that this credit card provides good discount for many Japanese restaurants. I am not holding any card so I will try to apply for this one because I love to eat out with friends at Japanese restaurants located in department stores.”

R6: “Actually, I am now considering getting a credit card but JCB is not quite famous in Thailand since most of the merchant prefer Visa or MasterCard. So I might not get JCB anyway.”

This advertisement held little relevance for participants. R1 and R3 already have credit cards and do not want to overspend, while R4 does not use credit cards. R2 says there is not enough information about the card, while R3 says the benefits are similar to other cards he already holds. R6 is considering applying for a credit card, but has a preference for more popular cards like Visa or MasterCard. Only R5 indicated any interest in applying. Thus, despite the link to Japanese restaurants this card is largely irrelevant to participants’ lifestyles.



Photo 15: JCB Credit Card advertisement

5.1.2.11 Boots

R1: “I got their member card. I used to shop some cosmetics at Boots but stopped after find out that buying from the supermarket is cheaper.”

R2: “Interesting because I am, sometimes, a Boots customers but I don’t know much about the benefits or the promotions.”

R3: “I always look for any sales campaign and discounts on consumer products because I buy them regularly one or two times a month. So if Boots has this kind of campaign I will surely go there next time.”

R4: “I buy thing at Boots especially when they have promotion for products that I use.”

R5: N/A

R6: “I shop at Booths some times and I also have its member cards but I normally compare the price with some other shop before I made a decision and this advertisement is good in the way I can get the information about the price, so if the price is cheaper I might go shop at Boots.”

Respondents R1, R2, R3, R4, and R6 all sometimes shop at Boots, and several do hold the discount card. However, participants stated that they looked for the best deal (such as at supermarkets) rather than shopping at Boots all the time. R2 said she did not know much about the discount deal, with R6 stated that the advertisement might encourage her to shop at Boots if the price was cheaper. Thus, participants’ main concern here was the available discounts, rather than the other aspects.



Photo 16: Boots advertisement

5.1.2.12 Summary

These advertisements had a range of different relationships to consumer ideal lifestyles. Some products, including Soy Milk, Bulgaria Yogurt, and Tea+Plus oolong tea, were more influential based on personal preference and health concerns than envisioned social position or lifestyle. Simply, whether participants were inclined to eat the products had more to do with their specific concerns than the product claims. The Soy Milk advertisement, which made explicit anti-aging claims and offered an event to attend to get more information, did not generate much interest. Participants also relied on their existing experience, as with the yogurt advertisement. The proposed health benefits did not offer much persuasive information for participants, although their own experience did influence their perception of the products.

The participant responses to other advertisements were more complex. For example, the August and Ideo condominium advertisements were split between ideal perceptions of home (as an individual space and requiring a convenient location), with a strong preference for those with a convenient location. Participants had an idea about their ideal living situation, and neither of these advertisements offered it. Financial products, including the K-Money investing site and JCB credit cards, often did not offer enough information for participants to understand how the product fit into their life. The ELLE Fashion Film festival was mainly seen as irrelevant, even to those who were interested in both film and fashion, while the Vaseline whitening cream mainly appealed to women. However, the British Council advertisement was positively regarded by all participants, all of whom identified the need for English as a career enhancement or requirement. Thus, although this was not one of the more visually compelling advertisements, it was actually one of the most effective at reflecting a service participants wanted and were interested in as a means of enhancing their ideal lifestyle.

5.2 Discussion

The interview outcomes showed a range of different levels of influence of the advertisements on the consumer's ideal lifestyles. They also showed a range of different levels of effectiveness in terms of persuasion.

One of the noticeable aspects of the interviews is that relevant information is essential for some products, such as condominiums and financial services. A major reason why the participants were not interested in the financial services products was that there was not enough information for them to understand it or determine if it will meet their needs. Similarly, the condominiums were frequently rejected because the information available (about convenience) was inadequate, and the Boots advertisement was conditionally influential (depending on comparison to other prices). This is consistent with these categories being primarily dependent on central route information, or information that is relevant to the products (O'Keefe 2008). It is also relevant under the TPB (Ajzen 2005). In particular, these attitudes are formulated based on how effective the product would be at meeting the individual's needs. For example, the inconvenience of the condominiums to public transport indicated that the product would not meet the consumer's needs.

Another interesting factor was the impact of negative attitudes toward the advertisements. The soy milk advertisement was a good example. Even though participants were generally positive about soy milk as a product, the advertisement was treated skeptically, the imagery viewed as unconvincing and the advertised event unattractive. This is consistent with previous studies into the impact of social norms on attitudes to advertisements, which have found that advertisements that include socially abrasive ideas were less convincing (Fam et al. 2013). Another example is the influence of social norms on attitudes, which can be seen in the Vaseline responses. Social norms influence attitudes toward advertisements (Fam et al. 2013). The Vaseline responses, which were divided mainly by gender differences, demonstrate that differences in social norms could influence how the products are viewed.

Perceived behavioral control also appeared to influence perceptions of the attitudes. This can be seen most clearly in the financial and condominium advertisements, where some participants expressed an inability to make decisions (either in general or with the information provided). Previous studies have also supported the impact of PCB on attitudes toward advertisements (Shen and Chen 2008) (Yang and Zhou 2011). In general, a higher level of control is associated with a more positive attitude. This can be seen in R6's attitude to the K-Money product compared to others; as he worked in finance, he felt more positive about the product.

The products generally reflected a split between high and low involvement, with low involvement products (like food and drink) depending on simple personal preference. High-involvement products, like English lessons, financial products and condominiums, required more information to make a decision, though the English lessons (which spoke to a universal need for career enhancement) were generally viewed positively. This is consistent with previous studies, which have found that consumers require more textual, central route information to make a decision (MacRury 2009). These products are also those that caused the most division between respondents, which could indicate that differences in lifestyle ideals are based around high involvement products rather than low involvement products.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

This research was focused on M2F, a free daily newspaper distributed throughout Bangkok's public transportation system. M2F, owned by the Post Group (which also owns paid daily Bangkok Post), is supported primarily by advertisement and uses full-page front-page and wrap-style color advertisements. These advertisements are presumably directed at the main audience segment for the newspaper, which includes young Thai urbanites who routinely commute on the MRT and BTS Sky Train systems. Although information about this group is limited, there are some known characteristics. For example, many of them (though not all) have moved to the city from smaller towns from work. Many live far away from work and must commute on public transportation, which is more efficient than the crowded roads. Bangkok residents tend to eat different diets than Thai people in other areas, with more new foods and attendant health concerns. Another concern is careers, which were the main focus of many individuals. Under theories of advertising, one of the ways the advertisement makes a connection to the individual is by reflecting their ideal self and lifestyle. This research examined this connection in connection to the young Thai urbanite audience. Objectives of the research included assessing how M2F advertisements reflected an ideal lifestyle and how consumers perceived it.

The research was a qualitative study, with research conducted in two stages. In the first stage, a selection of five front-page advertisements were chosen and analyzed and compared to what is known about the ideal lifestyles of young Thai urbanites. These advertisements identified a number of concerns the advertisers were speaking to. Two condominium advertisements reflected conflicting ideals, including convenience and comfort in the home. Three food advertisements reflected concerns about health as well as a desire for novelty and global origins of food.

The second stage of research was conducted as interviews with routine M2F readers (n = 6). These readers found the design of M2F advertisements interesting, but only were likely to respond if the advertisements were directly relevant to their lifestyle or needs. Respondents were showed 11 advertisements, selected from a range of consumer products, condominiums and financial products, which are representative of M2F's communications. The products most likely to reflect and influence ideal lifestyles were the high-involvement products, like English lessons, financial products and condominiums. (However, this did not mean these products were routinely accepted.) These products also required more information in order to make a decision, and were more likely to be judged on whether they met specific needs (like transport convenience). In contrast, consumer products and food were more likely to be assessed on personal preference or needs. This research suggests that there is a connection between involvement, persuasion routes, and perceptions of advertisements.

The study revealed five distinct characteristics of the ideal Bangkok lifestyle for participants. These included health, physical appearance, comfort and convenience, the appearance of sophistication, and financial security. Health and physical appearance concerns were common in respondents, with long hours, lack of time to exercise and eat right, and lack of sleep being common concerns. These concerns were also reflected in advertisements, especially for the fast-moving consumer goods (yogurt and cold tea). These advertisements made claims about the health characteristics of their products, such as their digestive health benefits, and about the physical appearance related benefits like fat loss. Thus, in this category the advertisements were responding to common needs and issues that the young urbanites experienced. The second group of ideal lifestyle characteristics was reflected primarily in the condominium advertisements. These dimensions included comfort and convenience, the appearance of sophistication, and financial security. Unlike the health and physical appearance dimensions, these were not uniformly appealing to the respondents. For example, respondents not considering a condominium purchase were more likely to see the appeal of comfortable and sophisticated advertising claims. In contrast, those that were condo owners or considering buying were more concerned

about financial security. This shows that there is no single, universal characteristic of the Thai urban lifestyle that appeal to all.

This research has also given us definition of ideal lifestyles in 5 areas which are;

- Ideal lifestyles in health – Living well, staying in good condition, eating clean and healthy food. Body is good inside and outside. From soy milk advertisement, one reader said that soy milk is considered better for health than cow milk and she prefers soy milk. Health concern is one thing that this group of people usually thinks about.
- Ideal lifestyles in physical appearance – Smart look with modern style as well as being attractive to other people. One interviewee stated that she wants fairer skin, so she has tried many skincare products. It is understandable that she wishes to be attractive. Also, in most advertisements, the use of good looking presenters can prove this point.
- Ideal lifestyles in comfort and convenience – Easy to commute, living in good environment, peaceful. In one condominium advertisement presented the picture of a young guy in very comfortable pose. One reader also said she like comfortable living in condominium and its location.
- Ideal lifestyles in the appearance of sophistication – Well educated, fluently language skill, great in general knowledge. Bilingual sentence was using in many advertisements showed that the advertiser targeted groups of people who know more than one language. And the result from language institution advertisement question confirms that young professional would like to improve their language skill.

- Ideal lifestyles financial security – Efficiency wealth management. The reader who is 23 answers the question about financial product advertisement that she has little knowledge about income managing, but she will think about it near future. This can confirm about financial security thinking has started since they are at young age.

6.2 Research Limitations

These findings can only be applied directly to M2F and its readers. This was a known limitation when the study was designed and conducted. However, the use of qualitative research was still ideal because of the relative scarcity of information about free daily newspapers. Since only one author has actually studied these newspapers in depth, this research constitutes some of the first exploratory research into consumer responses and perceptions. Thus, the limited ability to generalize the findings is an acceptable trade-off for the new information it contributes to the study. Another limitation is that the study did not seek out the advertiser perspective directly (for example, by interviewing marketing directors or others at the advertising firms). Instead, the researcher conducted a direct analysis of the advertisements and what they were communicating to the reader from the reader's perspective. This limitation means that advertisers could not explain their target markets or intended communications. However, it was necessary because of time and space limitations on the study. A third limitation is that the study is cross-sectional, drawing on evidence from a limited time, which could mean that if advertising trends or M2F policy changes underlying attitudes could change.

6.3 Contribution to Thai studies

This research has provided some insight into understanding of the needs, preferences and ideal lifestyles of young Thai urbanites. It revealed that this group of individuals typically commutes, works long hours, and may not have time to eat properly and exercise, socialize, and engage in other activities as they want. This leads to concerns about their health and physical appearance, which are reflected in the M2F advertisements they see every day. This group also has longer-term

concerns, such as their ideal future home life (comfort and convenience, the appearance of sophistication, and financial security), which are often reflected in advertisements for products like condominiums. Thus, this study has demonstrated that – at least in the case of M2F – the ideal lifestyles and dreams of young Thai workers in Bangkok is reflected in, and to some extent shapes, the advertising messages they receive. This finding is a contribution to Thai studies because it illuminates an aspect of consumer culture that has not been studied in Thailand previously. It also shows that Thailand does have a distinct and sophisticated cultural practice surrounding advertising and its appeal to specific consumer groups.

This study also shows that there are still existing gaps in the understanding of Thai urbanites, despite the growing and relatively young population. For example, the researcher was not able to find any studies about psychographics or cultural norms of younger Bangkok residents, even though this is one of the largest demographic groups in Thailand. There is little information about shared preferences or ideals, or about long-term goals and aspirations of this group. This makes it difficult to assess how well this study reflects Thai culture. It also points to future areas for further research, where more information could be collected to better understand young Thai urbanites and their preferences and ideal lifestyles and lives.

6.4 Recommendations

Although limited in scope (discussed below), the findings of this study have interesting implications for M2F advertisers. These implications lead to recommendations for advertising to this segment.

The main implication is that advertisers need to market their products appropriately based on the level of involvement and relevance to the target market segment. An example of an inappropriate communication approach is the advertisement of Soy Milk. The graphics of this advertisement were seen as unconvincing, while the text did not offer enough information. While there was a promised consumer fair where consumers could find more information, this was seen

as unnecessary – participants could, after all, just find the information on the Internet. This advertisement did not fit into ideal lifestyle perceptions since it was inconvenient and did not offer enough information. Thus, while participants all had personal preferences for soy milk, they did not view the advertisement as being very persuasive. Similarly, participants complained that the information provided by the K-Money advertisement was insufficient to determine if they were interested. Advertisers need to keep this in mind when planning their campaigns. If a health claim is made, it needs to be supported by more information, rather than irrelevant graphics. Additionally, advertisers should provide more relevant information.

Another implication is that participants at different stages of life have different concepts of ideal lifestyle. For example, while the two youngest participants responded positively to the condominium advertisements, the older ones, who had more experience of buying or looking for condominiums, rejected them because of inconvenience. Thus, even though their ages were only a decade apart, these groups had different ideas of what was required for an ideal home. Advertisers should carefully consider what they are offering to make sure it is desirable for the group they intend to sell their products to.

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APPENDIX



จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

VITA

Born in 1980, in Bangkok, Thailand, Mr. Wittawat Pitchayakun finished high school from Chiangrai province in 1998. After his long education journey, he finally got his Bachelor's Degree in Communication Arts (Journalism) from Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University in 2011.

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