CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents: (1) a summary of the study, (2) a summary of the findings, (3) discussion of the reasons why working people in Silom sub-district read or did not read user manuals for mobile phones, (4) motivating factors which influenced the subjects of the study to read user manuals, and (5) recommendations for further research.

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted to find out the reasons why working people in Silom sub-district read or did not read user manuals for mobile phones and their reading behavior. Moreover, this research aimed to investigate the motivating factors which the subjects of the study thought influenced them to read user manuals for mobile phones.

5.1.1 Objectives of the study

- To identify the reasons why working people in Silom sub-district decide to read or not to read user manuals for mobile phones
- To investigate the percentage of working men and women in Silom sub-district who read or did not read their mobile phone manuals; and
- To find out the motivating factors which influenced working people in Silom sub-district to read user manuals

5.1.2 Subjects, Materials, and Procedure

The subjects of the study were 100 men and women who worked in Silom sub-district. The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire comprised of four parts as follows:

Part 1: General information of respondents including gender, age, level of education, occupation, and level of income per month.

Part 2: Questions concerning mobile phone usage and the manual reading behavior of respondents. This part was further separated into two sub-parts; that is, the part for only the respondents who read user manuals to answer, and the part for respondents who did not read the manuals.

Part 3: This part was formulated by using a five-point Likert scale to find out the motivating factors which influenced the subjects to read the user manuals.

Part 4: This part was a blank space for the respondents to express their ideas for improving user manuals.

After collecting the questionnaires, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program version 11.5 was used to analyze the data. The data is reported in frequency, percentage, and mean.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The results of the study can be summarized as follows:

5.2.1 General Information of Respondents

Most of the respondents were females at 66.0%, while 34.0% were males. Of the respondents, 42.0% were between 26-30 years old, followed by those aged between 31-35, accounting for 29.0%. Only one respondent (1.0%) was more than 45 years old. For their highest education level, the percentage of the respondents who received Bachelor's degrees and those who had Master' degrees were nearly the same, i.e., 47.0% and 48.0%. Regarding the respondents' occupations and their income per month, most of them were private company employees (96.0%) and earned a monthly income in the range of 20,001 to 30,000 bath.

5.2.2 Mobile Phone Usage and the Manual Reading Behavior of Respondents

Almost all of the respondents (99.0%) in this study had been using mobile phones for more than one year. Thirty-four respondents (34.0%) had been using mobile phones for more than 10 years. More than half of the respondents (57.0%) bought a new mobile phone every 2-3 years.

In terms of manual reading behavior, 70 respondents (70.0%) stated that they read user manuals for mobile phones. Below are three main reasons for reading the manuals ranked from the highest score to the lowest score. They were:

1) To learn new operating functions of the mobile phones they bought (81.4%),

2) To solve the problems encountered while using their mobile phones (15.7%), and

3) To learn about the safety information regarding mobile phone operation (2.9%).

In addition, 28 respondents (40.0%) indicated that they read the manuals in a selective way. They selectively read only sections containing the information which was mostly relevant to their needs. These respondents also read the manuals only one time after they bought a new mobile phone. Twenty-one respondents (30.0%) mentioned that they read the manuals every time they wanted to learn about the operating functions they had never used before.

For the sections in the manuals they wanted to read most, 60 respondents (85.7%) indicated the section which explained the operating functions of the mobile phone. Next, 9 respondents (12.9%) indicated the troubleshooting section, while only one of them (1.4%) wanted to read the safety information section.

In terms of the problems the respondents often found when reading the manuals, this study revealed the following findings:

1) Thirty-five respondents (50.0%) complained that there were not enough explanations about the operating functions for the phones to help them understand those functions, and

2) Twenty-four respondents (34.3%) could not easily find the sections they wanted to read.

Regarding 30 respondents (30.0%) who did not read the manuals, the most important reason was that 25 respondents (83.4%) had previous knowledge about the basic operations of the mobile phones.

When asked about how to solve the problems found in mobile phone operation, the majority of the respondents (63.3%) stated that they asked for help from others.

5.2.3 Factors Motivating Respondents to Read User Manuals for Mobile Phones

From this study, there were several motivating factors which the respondents considered very influential in leading them to read the manuals. The results are as follows:

For content and language factors, the respondents rated having explanations with covered all of the mobile phone operating functions as a very

influential factor with the highest mean score of 3.80, followed by using simple language (3.75), and inserting detailed explanations in the troubleshooting section (3.55). The average score of content and language factors was at the very influential level, 3.60.

For manual size and binding factors, the mean score of each factor (compact and portable manual size and durable binding) were more or less the same, i.e., 3.56 and 3.59. The average score of these factors was at the very influential level, 3.57.

For illustration factors, the respondents rated relevant illustrations to the operating functions of the phone with the highest score of 3.70, followed by symbols locating the sections which the readers wanted to read at 3.64. The average score of illustration factors was at the very influential level, 3.56.

For font and color factors, easy-to-read font styles received the highest score of 3.72 from the respondents, followed by enlarged font sizes of headings (3.60), and enlarged font sizes of the text in the body (3.51). The average score of font and color factors was at the moderately influential level, 3.37.

5.3 DISCUSSION

This section presents a discussion of the reasons for reading or not reading user manuals for mobile phones.

5.3.1 Reasons for Reading or Not Reading User Manuals for Mobile Phones

The study results revealed that the number of working people in Silom sub-district who read user manuals for mobile phones was more than twice those who did not. The respondents who read the manuals gave the reasons for reading as: (1) to learn the new operating functions of the phone, (2) to solve problems when using the device, and (3) to learn safety information about mobile phone operation. All of the respondents' reasons for reading the manuals are consistent with the reading theory proposed by Burnett (2001). Namely, the reasons from the respondents match Burnett's statement—people "read to learn". When people read to learn, they want to know the way to solve problems and gain background knowledge, which is similar to the purposes of the respondents in this study. In addition, a high percentage of the

respondents who read the user manuals for mobile phones indicated that the manuals are still important to product users. This finding supported the observation by Riordan and Pauley (1999), who stated that "Companies sell not only their products but also knowledge of how to use those products properly. This knowledge is contained in manuals" (p.320).

Regarding their reading behavior, 40.0% of the respondents selectively read the manuals. They read only the parts containing the information they wanted. This reading behavior was relevant to the observation of reading process mentioned by Redish (1993) and White (1996). Redish and White explained that when readers want to read technical documents, they scan the document and then choose the parts that are relevant to their needs before reading. Their reading process is highly selective.

Although the largest number of the respondents in this study read the manuals in a selective way, 13 respondents (18.6%) read the whole manuals one time after buying a new mobile phone. This finding was in contrast to the observations of Redish and White, but supported Lay's et al (2000) statement. Lay et al believed that people read technical documents in various ways depending on reading conditions.

When asked about the section which the respondents wanted to read most, they chose those which explained the operating functions of the mobile phone. The respondents' answer logically matched the main reason of reading user manuals—to learn about the new operating functions of the mobile phone.

As for the problems about which the respondents complained, half of them rated insufficient explanations about the operating functions of the mobile phone as the number one annoyance, followed by having difficulty in finding the section they wanted to read. Their answers were as same as that of Novick's (2006) respondents. Novick conducted similar research about computer manual reading behavior. In his research, 25 participants complained that manuals did not give enough needed information and that the navigation system in manuals was poorly arranged.

After asking the respondents' why they read the manual, what section they wanted to read most, and what problems they often found, all of their answers mentioned "the operating functions" of the phone. Thus, it is obvious that the

respondents' needs focused on mobile phone's operating functions more than other parts.

As for the respondents who did not read user manuals, their main reason was that they already had background knowledge about mobile phone operation (83.4%). When asked about the method used to solve problems found in the operation of the mobile phone, the majority of them (63.3%) stated that they asked for help from others. This method was similar to that of the respondents in Novick's study. Perhaps this is the easiest way to ask for help. However, this research also found that 4 respondents used the Internet to search for ways to solve problems.

5.3.2 Factors Motivating Mobile Phone Users to Read User Manuals

In this survey, the respondents were not only asked about their reasons for reading or not reading the manuals, but they were also requested to rate the factors which they considered important in motivating them to read the manuals. The findings are discussed as follows:

1) Content and language factors

Among content and language factors, the respondents considered having explanations that covered all of the operating functions in mobile phones as a very influential factor with the highest mean score of 3.80, followed by using simple language in the manuals for which the mean score was 3.75. These findings were similar to those of Novick and Ericsson Mobile Communications AB. To illustrate, the participants in Novick's study complained that the explanations in user manuals did not cover all of the functions and that they should be improved. For the results from Ericsson Mobile Communications AB's research, the respondents suggested that the language used in the manuals should be as simple as possible, and that technical terms be avoided.

However, interesting point from the findings was that the respondents did not consider having detailed information in the safety section in the manuals as an important factor. The mean score which displayed the level of influence for this factor was at the moderately influential level, 3.39.

2) Format factors

The comparison of the mean score among the format factors is divided into three sub-sections: (1) manual size and binding factors, (2) illustration factors, and (3) font and color factors. It revealed that easy-to-read font styles received the highest mean score of 3.72. This result was not found in either Novick's or Ericsson Mobile Communications AB's studies in which the participants only complained about too small font size. Although the participants in Ericsson Mobile Communications AB's research requested that modern font styles be used in the manuals, they did not mention easy-to-read font styles. They, moreover, did not give any details about the characteristics of the modern font styles they wanted. Conversely, the questionnaire used in this study specifically indicated what easy-to-read font styles should look like, i.e., spaces between each character not being too wide or too close, and handwriting font style avoided. As a result, the respondents had a clear picture in their mind when answering this question which might have led them to rate this factor with the highest score.

This study also found out that the respondents highlighted the importance of relevancy between illustrations and operating functions and the symbols for navigating the sections in the manuals as very influential factors with the mean scores of 3.70 and 3.64. These findings are similar to those in the Novick and Ericsson Mobile Communications AB's studies. To illustrate, in Ericsson Mobile Communications AB's study, the participants complained that a user manual called "The Jazz Player" (black and white and color) contained irrelevant photos. In addition, a manual named "The Product" had unimpressive cartoons which the readers thought were useless in helping them to understand the functions of the phone. In Novick's research, the participants mentioned that it was difficult to find a search term in both printed and online manuals. Thus, these results imply that manuals printed for mobile phone users today lack good symbols to help the readers locate the section they want to read in a short time and also contain illustrations which are irrelevant to the functions of the mobile phone.

5.4 CONCLUSION

The following conclusion can be drawn from the discussion above:

5.4.1 User manuals for mobile phones are still important for product users which can be inferred by the high percentage of the respondents who read the manuals.

5.4.2 The respondents' main reason for reading the manuals is that they wanted to learn new operating functions of the mobile phone. They selectively read some sections only one time after buying a new phone, and the section they wanted to read most was the explanations of the operating functions. However, the respondents were upset with this section because the explanations did not cover all of the functions they needed. As a result, this section should be improved by adding more detailed explanations to cover all of the functions of the phone. As for the respondents who did not read the manual, their main reason was that they had previous knowledge about how to operate the mobile phone; when they faced an operating problem, they asked for help from others.

5.4.3 User manual design should be improved in three main aspects: font styles (use easy-to-read font styles), relevancy between illustrations and operating functions, and symbols for helping readers to locate specific sections.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are made for future research.

5.5.1 Due to limited time and budget, only 100 respondents were used in this study. The sample size of the population should be increased in order to obtain more reliable results.

5.5.2 Similar studies should be conducted in different and larger areas in order to help validate and confirm the findings of this study.